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Brady.

A Tea Garden

From a Painting by George Morland.

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THE DRINK OF PLEASURE AND OF HEALTH

BY

W. Gordon Stables,

C.M., M.D., R.N.

Author of "Friends in Fur," "The Cruise of the Snowbird," "Jungle, Peak and Plain," "Wild Adventures in Wild Places," &c., &c.

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TEA

THE DRINK OF PLEASURE AND OF HEALTH.

CHAPTER FIRST.

The Tea Plant—Where is its Home?—Tea in the Olden Time—Djarma, a Legend of China and Japan.

ANY attempt to give *briefly*, and at the same time with some degree of accuracy, the history of the tea plant would naturally end in failure. Indeed were the space at our command as great as that of a three volume novelist's, and were the writer, ere commencing his work, to surround himself with all the authorities that ever mentioned tea, he would hardly complete it to his own satisfaction or that of his readers, the number of whom it would doubtless be easy enough to reckon on his ten fingers. Most of us learned something about tea when we were at school, and some of us something more when we went

to college. Nothing more easy than to remember that tea was first introduced into England, in the year of our Lord sixteen hundred and sixty something, Charles the Second's head being the uneasy one that then wore the crown; that it came to us all the way from Canton in China; that it was grown somewhere near there in gardens and plantations of very great beauty, superintended by strange effeminate looking Foochoos, wearing impossible hats and carrying packets of tea as large as ice chests; that the beauty of those tea gardens was exceedingly great; that lofty mountains, green-clad to their very summits with feathery palm-trees, guarded them from the wild winds and perhaps fiery dragons of the north, that the skies were always blue, the birds always bright winged and happy; that from grottoes and groves embowered in trees bearing Hesperidean fruit as large as ten-inch flowerpots, glimpses could be caught of sunny seas, where boats lay motionless, and where lovely islands seemed to be hung in the very sky itself; and that in those groves and grottoes there always sat, or lounged, ladies of fairy-like beauty, with triangular eyes, and boots no bigger than walnut shells.

Probably a great deal of the schoolboy's tea lore, or that even of the schoolmaster himself, is gathered as much from china cups or cheeseplates of the willow pattern, as from books themselves; and probably too the one source of information is about as authentically instructive as the other.

But

But when a boy leaves school for university or college, he learns, if botany be a branch of his studies, that the word tea is a corruption of the Chinese *Tsia*, or *Tcha*, *Cha*. This is right enough ; but he is also taught that there are three distinct species of the tea plant, all belonging to the natural family Ternströmiaceæ, namely *Thea viridis*, or green tea ; *Thea Bohea*, which yields the black tea; and *Thea Assamensis*, which gives us the teas of India, including Assam. At most examinations he would run a risk of being plucked, if he boldly asserted that there was only one species of the tea plant. And yet he would be, so far as our knowledge goes, as nearly right as possible, for the differences which the supposed trio of tea plants exhibit are more apparent than real, and are probably due to the influences of climate, soil, and cultivation.

From this tea plant, the *Thea Sinensis*, we, the public, obtain our supply of teas, good, bad, and indifferent ; and, as several kinds, (or species if the word is more palatable,) of tea are offered to us for sale in the market and in shops, notably Chinese, Indian, and Ceylonese, it is very much to our interest to know which we should choose for consumption.

We want the best we can get for our money, that is certain. It is a matter that concerns our health, for tea has become to us one of the necessaries of life ; we drink it morning and evening, and we find ourselves refreshed and benefited thereby; it smooths our ruffled

ruffled nerves, calms excitement, and gives us strength to battle coolly and successfully against the worries of this work-a-day world. We want the best tea therefore we can get for our money, the *best*, the *purest*, and the *most genuine*. Good quality is a *sine quâ non*, it is by this we will judge the tea more than by its price, its appearance, its perfume, the wording of its advertisements, the respectability of the firm who vend it, or the country it comes from.

But stay, has the country it comes from nothing to do with the quality of the tea, even apart from the manner of its cultivation? It undoubtedly has, and this leads us face to face with the questions: Where is the home *par excellence* of the tea plant? Of what country or countries is it really a native?

The land of the birth of any tree, plant, or flower is that in which nature, and not mankind, first planted it; or, to use Darwinian language, that in which it was first evolved, for here it must find the food natural to it, the food on which it alone can thrive, and which produces the peculiar active principles afloat in the blood that circulates in its leaves, or is stored in its roots.

We can bring any plant from any country, and by means of an artificial temperature and an artificial soil, get it to flourish in any other; but neither climate nor soil can be manufactured on a large scale.

An instinct seems to tell us, that every product of nature comes to us best and purest from its native land, adulteration apart of course

course. And this is no mere prejudice. Scotch oatmeal, to take a familiar example, finds more favour in the southern markets than English, and English wheat in the far north than that grown there. And rightly too; and if the doctrine holds good with regard to a single cereal consisting largely of starch, it surely does so with an herb like tea, a wonderful compound of cellulose, of tannin, of extractive resin, ethereal oil, and theine, etc., etc.

Very old books tell us that the tea plant is indigenous in China, leaving us to infer that the land of the celestial is the native home of the tea plant. If this be so, then it would be only reasonable to suppose that Chinese teas are the best, and we should drink these and none other.

But is this so? Let us reason the matter as briefly as possible, but without an ounce of bias or prejudice in favour of either India or China.

China then was first in the field with her teas. We know the value of first impressions. The Chinese have cultivated and drank tea for considerably over one thousand years. To them, at all events, belongs the credit of having been the first as a people to appreciate the virtues of the tea plant. It is said that tea as a Chinese drink was first spoken of by an Arab merchant of the name of Soliman about the year 850. (Soliman, by the way, is as common a name among Arabs, as Smith is among Englishmen.) Neither Greeks nor Romans make any mention of the

the tea plant, so we may infer they knew nothing about it. The Dutch, once a great maritime power, were perhaps the first to bring it to our country in small quantities. This would be about the year 1645 or later, but it was known to the English East India Company some thirty or forty years before that. However, when first brought to England in small parcels, it was readily bought by the wealthy, who gave from £5 to £10 a pound for it.

Then we find it recorded that the East India Company, in 1664, presented his Britannic majesty with two pounds of it. It is to be presumed, by the way, that his majesty's cook was instructed in the right way of making this beverage, and that he did not boil a pound of tea, strain it, and serve up the leaves as a vegetable. No, he could not have done this, for the king came to like it, and after that tea began to get fashionable; and in 1667 we find the Company directing their agent at Bantam to send home one hundred pounds of the best he could procure.

As early as 1660 tea began to find its way into London coffee houses, Garraway's leading. Pepys, Secretary of the Admiralty, writes in his diary: "I called for a cup of tea, a Chinese drink which I had never before tasted." This was in September, 1661, and at that time there was a duty of eighteenpence a gallon levied by Act of Parliament on every gallon of the infusion. But in 1689 this was repealed, and an excise duty of five shillings in the pound was levied on the tea itself.

So

So the Chinese drink, as years rolled on, became gradually more and more popular. And, the more popular it became, the greater a source of revenue it turned out; and about sixty years ago, when owing to differences with China the supply seemed in danger of being stopped, the question began to be mooted whether tea might not be cultivated as well and as cheaply in other countries, so as to render us independent of the celestials. An offer, however, of its gold medal and fifty guineas by the Society of Arts, to any one who should grow and prepare at least twenty pounds of tea of good quality in some of the British colonies, brought no response, and it was twenty years later ere the medal was awarded for samples of tea cultivated in East India.

Here is an account of the growth and preparation of tea in China about fifty-five years ago. On the whole it may be considered pretty correct.

"The black teas are Pekoe, the finest; then, ranking in succession, Souchong, Congou, and Bohea. The green teas, Gunpowder, Imperial, Hyson, Young Hyson, Hyson skin, and Twankay. All the black teas exported (with the exception of a part of the Bohea, grown in Woping, a district of Canton) are grown in Fokien, a hilly, maritime, populous, and industrious province, lying on the north-east borders of Canton. Owing to the peculiar nature of the Chinese laws as to inheritance, and probably also in some degree to the despotic genius of the government, landed property

is

is much subdivided throughout the empire; so that tea is generally grown in gardens or plantations of no great extent. The plant yields a crop in from two to three years, increasing in quantity until it reaches maturity in about five years. The leaves are picked by the cultivator's family, and immediately conveyed to market, where a class of persons who make it their peculiar business purchase and collect them in quantities, and manufacture them in part; that is, expose them to be dried under a shed. A second class of individuals, commonly known in the Canton markets as 'the tea merchants,' repair to the districts where the tea is produced, and purchase it in its half prepared state from the first class, and complete the manufacture by garbling the different qualities, in which operation women and children are chiefly employed. A final drying is then given, and the tea packed in chests, and divided according to quality into parcels of from one hundred to six hundred chests each. These parcels are stamped with the name of the district and the grower or manufacturer, exactly as is practised with the wines of Bordeaux and Burgundy, the indigo of Bengal, and many other commodities; and from this circumstance they get the name of *chops*, the Chinese term for a seal or signet.

"Some of the leaf buds of the finest black tea plants are picked early in the spring, before they expand. These constitute Pekoe, or black tea of the highest quality. This is sometimes called white

white blossom tea, from there being intermixed with it, to give it a higher perfume, a few blossoms of a species of olive (*olea fragrans*), a native of China. A second crop is taken from the same plants in the beginning of May, a third about the middle of June, and a fourth in August, which last, consisting of large and old leaves, is of very inferior flavour and value. The younger the leaf the more highly flavoured, and consequently the more valuable, is the tea.

"With some of the congous and souchongs is sometimes mixed a little pekoe, to enhance the flavour; and hence the distinction among the London tea dealers of these sorts of tea into the ordinary kinds and those of 'pekoe flavour.' Bohea, or the lowest class of black tea, is partly composed of the lower grades, namely the fourth crop of the teas of Fokien, left unsold in the markets of Canton after the season of exportation has passed, and partly of the teas of the district of Woping in Canton. The green teas are grown and selected in the same manner as the black, to which the description now given more particularly refers, and the different qualities arise from the same causes." It will be seen farther on, that in reality green tea or black tea may be prepared from any species of plant, the age of the leaves and the treatment they undergo determining the nature of the tea. "The gunpowder tea," the writer goes on to say, "here stands in the place of the pekoe, being composed of the unopened buds of the

the spring crop. Imperial hyson and young hyson consist of the second and third crops. The light and inferior leaves, separated from the hyson by a winnowing machine, constitute hyson skin, an article in considerable demand among the Americans. The process of drying the green teas differs from that of the black, the first being dried in iron pots or vases over a fire, the operator constantly stirring the leaves with his naked hand. The operation is one of considerable nicety, particularly with the finer teas, and is performed by persons who make it their exclusive business."

The above was written before Indian teas were even dreamt of, in days when our favourite beverage had an exclusive right to be called what Mr. Pepys nominated it, "*a Chinese drink*," and at a time when the East India Company still held the monopoly of the tea trade of China.

As soon however as this monopoly was broken up, shortly after the passing of the first reform bill, the Indian government began to consider the feasibility of making Hindustan a great tea-growing country, and a committee was appointed to inquire into the matter. The indigenous tea plant had been discovered growing in Assam, about which it would seem there was at first some doubt, but in 1835 we find the Calcutta Tea Committee writing as follows: "We are now enabled to state with certainty that not only is it (the *Thea Assamensis*) a genuine tea, but that no doubt can

can be entertained of its being *the identical tea of China*, which is the exclusive source of *all the varieties and shades of the tea of commerce.*" The italicising is added, and it matters little whether the teas of commerce are all obtained from the same species of tea plant or are not.

However, it might be thought that this indigenous Indian tea is the origin of all the present Indian teas of commerce; such is not the case. The first or experimental garden, planted by the government in Assam, was started in 1835 at Lukimpore, and did not succeed well. It was ten years after this that quantities of seed were imported from China, and nurseries established in the Himalayas, the government of Bengal thus ignoring or seeming ignorant of the fact that the indigenous tea plant of Assam was superior to that of China, although requiring greater care to rear it. From the Chinese bushes reared in the above-mentioned nurseries the gardens of the Himalayas were first formed.

All knowledge comes to us slowly, and it has eventually been found that the plant best suited to our Indian tea gardens or plantations is a hybrid between the two former named; but the nearer it approaches in character to the indigenous variety, the more valuable is the tea that is obtained from its leaves.

One thing then is self evident, namely this: there *is a* tea plant indigenous to India, and there is no record in history that it has ever been brought and acclimatised there. Everything would seem

seem to lead us to infer that the tea plant is of spontaneous growth in that country, a genuine outgrowth of the soil, and that India, if not the *only* home of the tea plant, is at least one of its homes.

But can we say the same of China? This is very doubtful. One writer tells us that the tea plant was introduced into China from Corea, and that it was from the former country imported into Japan.

There are also a variety of different legends on record in China, to account for the first appearance of the tea plant in that country. But to turn round on the celestials and say to them "The tea plant is not indigenous to your country, and we can prove it from your own legends" would be obviously unfair. We can prove nothing from mere mythology. There have been wonderful stories invented or evolved to account for the origin of the grape, as well as the tea plant. But it would really appear that there is some degree of truth attached to the story of Djarma, a native of India, who in some way or other, if we are to give credence to the records of China and Japan, first imported the tea plant into these countries about the year 510, or later. It is strange, at all events, that both should mention and both speak decidedly enough about his coming from India. Looking merely at the ludicrous side of the story, a wag might ask, How did Djarma come to China, by sea or by land? Did he bring plants with him in a flowerpot, or merely specimens of tea and seeds? Was

Was he a member of the Acclimatisation Society? and so on and so forth. Although we may feel inclined to believe in the story of Djarma's introduction of the tea plant into China, the real truth may be that this gentleman, or prince, after settling down in China, found the tea plant of his native land growing wild on the Chinese mountains, and taught the people the virtues of the herb, and encouraged them to grow and cultivate it in plantations near to their dwellings.

A writer in *Chambers's Journal* informs us that in 1689 an anonymous tract appeared in London, describing tea as the leaves of a plant that grew plentifully in the East Indies. Probably the author's publisher was not a pushing man, for little notice was taken of the volunteered information; and so Robert Bruce, a Scotchman, acquired all the glory, or a good share of it, of discovering the Indian tea plant in the year 1823. The article concludes as follows:

"The tea growers of India have a hopeful prospect before them. In 1851 the exportation of Indian tea amounted to 262,839 pounds; by 1863 it had risen to two and a half million pounds; in 1876 English buyers were found for 28,126,100 pounds. Every year sees an increase in the consumption of Indian tea; and India possesses vast reserves of land fit for conversion into tea gardens, and could, if need be, supply the wants of the whole world."

But there is a stronger inference that India is the original home of the tea plant, deducible from the fact already mentioned, that the plant in China grows only as a bush, while in India it attains the dimensions of a tree, for all things naturally thrive best in the land that gave them birth.

The case before us then stands thus: (1) We have it on the authority of some of the most eminent botanists that there is but one species of the plant which yields the teas of commerce, although there may be a hundred different varieties. (2) This plant may *seem* to be indigenous to both India and China, but whereas there is no evidence to show that it has ever been imported into the former country, we have the records of two different nations to prove that it was originally brought to China from India. And (3) We find the tea plant in China a mere bush at best, while in India it attains, in the wild state, the proportions of a tree; just as we find the *Magnolia grandiflora* of this country a mere dwarf, compared with the splendid lord of the forest, that adorns the woods of northern America.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER SECOND.

How Tea is prepared in China and India.

THE utility, not to say superiority, of Indian teas is pretty generally recognised by the trade in this country.

If we go to our family grocer and mention the subject to him, he will in all probability frankly inform us that China teas are mixed with a proportion of Indian, in order to render them more saleable.

"More saleable?" we would say, "in what way? pray explain."

"You see," the reply would most likely be, "the Indian teas are more racy, penetrating, and possess more backbone."

But one question leads to another, and we would doubtless inquire:

"Well, but why not sell the Indian tea alone by itself?"

If he were a candid man, (and there is far more candour among tradesmen now-a-days than there used to be,) he would say:

"Grocers do sell a lot of Indian teas every day, and every day they are becoming more popular. But the poorer public will not give the price, they are somewhat dearer."

"But,"

"But," we would add, "if they go a deal further——?"

"Ah! yes, true," the reply would come, "in that way they are positively cheaper in the long run; but as yet the people have not been taught to see this."

So much for the utility of Indian teas. On the other hand, open what book or authority on tea we choose, in some way or other we find the fact stated, if fact it be, that these teas are in all respects superior to those of China. We must not however be too ready to accept statements for facts, without putting them to the test.

It is claimed for Indian teas that they possess more of the virtues of the true herb, that they have a larger proportion of the aromatic or essential oil, and more theine. This last (we may state parenthetically) is the active principle of tea, just as quinine is of Peruvian bark.

Whence arises this difference between the teas of China and those of India? Has it not something to do with the process of manufacture pursued in the two countries?

The easiest way of answering these questions will be, we think, to cross the ocean in a voyage of the mind, and thus learn in the two great tea-growing lands how tea is grown and prepared.

We will land in China first; it is the oldest country, and ought to have the preference.

We already know (*vide* Chapter I.) the way the Chinese prepared

pared their teas in the olden time, some sixty years ago ; but we will doubtless find very great improvement now. But do we? Mr. Samuel Baildon* is a passenger in the same steamer with us. Listen to what he tells us ere we go on shore.

"In China people are not particular as to the kind of land on which they plant tea ; besides which the cultivation is carried on almost exclusively by natives. The tea plant is farmed by the Chinese."

"One moment, Mr. Baildon," we say, interrupting him, "you mentioned 'natives' ; is it not a fact that when plantations were first started in India these same natives had to be imported, to show our British planters how to cultivate the plant, and even how to pick and prepare the leaves ?"

"Quite true," answers Mr. B., with a quiet smile ; "but you will hardly find a Chinaman now in our Indian plantations, holding a situation of responsibility. It is all the other way ; we can now teach them."

We beg pardon for the interruption, and our fellow passenger proceeds.

"Families in China have little patches, and make the most they can out of them. Some sell their leaves green, others make the tea and sell that. When the leaf is gathered and sold to a buyer, it is very probably sold again to some one else ; but while it is

* The author of "Tea in Assam," etc.

passing

passing in this way from hand to hand it is deteriorating every hour. Or, when the grower of tea manufactures it, he sells it to a buyer of made tea, who sells it to another and so on, and often tea passes in baskets through five or six hands to the seaport, and is then packed.

"Large dealers buy up tea and put it aside till they have a sufficiency of the same kind for final sale; and the time that elapses between the plucking of the leaf, and the packing of the tea, is most indefinite. When the grower of the leaf has sold it, or the tea made from it, he has done with it; whether it turns out good or bad, shows a profit or shows a loss, is nothing at all to him. All he has to do is to grow more.

"As to the shipper of the tea, he knows nothing at all of the spot where it was grown, and provided he realizes well, it is no matter to him whether the grower of the crop cultivated his plants properly or not."

When we land in China we find these words only too true. No advance has been made in the way of improvement of land, method of cultivation, or anything else, unless it be in adulteration. We find raw leaves sold in the markets, just as they are taken from the bushes, and these can be bought by anybody who chooses to make tea, to sell to the exporter.

We often hear it said that the Chinese keep the very best tea to themselves. Such an accusation has its foundation in ignorance of

of the exact state of the case. That the Chinese are careless however, and not over cleanly, in the way they prepare tea for the English market it is impossible to deny.

One thing which we cannot help objecting to, quite apart from adulteration, is the length of time which elapses between the plucking of the leaves and the preparation of the tea, and this for two reasons. For firstly, to be really good and safe to the health of the consumer, tea should be manufactured as speedily as can be after the leaf is gathered. Again, as the tea has to pass through so many hands ere it is finally packed at the seaport, it is more liable to adulteration as well as to deterioration.

We would fain not believe the statement that appeared in a recent Indian paper on this subject, but we give it for what it is worth. "We have heard of leaves being carried about for weeks in sacks, used as mattresses, and becoming putrid, before being made into tea."

The *Times of India*, according to good authority, states under the date July 26th, 1881, that a letter from Melbourne of June 17th, 1881, contains the following sentences: "Great excitement has been caused here, and a great outcry raised against Chinese tea, owing to the seizure and confiscation of a cargo of adulterated poisonous rubbish, sent from China per *Glamis Castle*. Part was sent on from Sydney. The lot was sold here at $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ to $4d.$ The matter

matter was ventilated in Parliament." In the same letter there is an allusion to small pox among Chinamen, which it would be unfair to publish.

We must not be hard upon the celestials; accidents will happen and are excusable, and it is obviously not the interest of Chinamen to sell putrid tea.

But cleanliness in the preparation of articles of diet is of such paramount importance that, do as we will, we cannot forgive those who are careless and filthy in this respect.

And now let us leave China and continue the voyage to India. We find, though we cannot visit them all, that the following are the principal tea districts in this vast country.

First the hill districts:

Kangra in the Punjaub; Kumaon and Gurhwall and Dehra Doon in the N. W. Provinces; the Neilgherries in the Madras Presidency; Darjeeling on the Nepaul frontier of Bengal; and the Terai and Dooars at the foot of the Darjeeling hills.

Secondly the districts in the plain:

Assam proper and its southern extensions of Cachar and Sylhet; Chota Nagpore in Bengal proper; and Chittagong in North British Burmah.

It is in the plains that tea grows best; it needs a warm moist climate, the average yield being there about 440 pounds per acre per annum, against about 280 for the hilly regions. The plains are

are of course far more unhealthy as a residence for Europeans than are the higher and more temperate regions.

Another fact is worthy of note ; the tea grown in the hilly districts, though not so strong, is of more delicate flavour, while the plains leaves are pungent and strong, and it is these that are so largely used for mixing with other teas, to give them strength and beauty of flavour.

In India the grower not only chooses his garden and plants it, but he considers himself responsible for the tea from first to last. If it should turn out bad, woe betide him ! his business would suffer materially. It is to his interest therefore to see that the herb is manufactured into good tea as speedily as possible, and everything is done cleanly and orderly.

"In tea gardens during the winter months the tea shrubs are pruned and trimmed down, so as not to be more than three feet high and four in diameter, having a flat even top ; the pickers are thus able to reach forward into the centre of the top, when the spring arrives and the bushes put forth their leaves.

"The tea harvest extends from March to November, but the midsummer months are the most productive ; then every one in the garden has to be very active, working early and late, the object being to gather as large a quantity of good young leaf as possible, without in any way injuring the shrub for future growth. The sprig from which the young leaves are culled is from four

to

to nine inches long, only the three or four upper leaves being plucked; the pluckers nip the leaf off above the stem, so as not to interfere with young buds that may grow below. Good tea can only be made of the new young succulent leaves, the younger the leaf the finer the tea; the great desire of the manufacturer is to have all picked at the right time, quality not quantity being the object aimed at.

"After the leaf is picked the first thing to be done is to manufacture it into tea as soon as possible in a careful and efficient manner, for careless improper treatment will destroy the choicest leaf, rendering it worthless; much depends upon how the leaf is manipulated in the factory as to its taste, flavour, strength, palatableness in the cup, and value in the market.

"There are four operations necessary with the leaf after it is plucked, before it is made into tea: (1) Withering, (2) Rolling, (3) Fermenting, (4) Firing. There is not space to describe each process; but suffice it to say that sun, light, heat, air, hands and heads are all brought into requisition to dry and manipulate the leaf, the great object being to wither the leaf and preserve its juices; not long ago all these processes were conducted by hand labour, but the introduction of machinery enables the manager of a garden to accomplish his purpose more surely and with better effect.

"When the leaf has been turned into tea it is sorted and sifted, then

then packed up into chests. The tea is hot when it is hermetically sealed into air-tight chests, and is not opened again till required for the retail market, thus confining all the strength and fragrance, none being lost by exposure after it is ready.

"Much, nay all the success, depends on the manager of the garden, for on him devolves the care, oversight, and superintendence of everything that will make or mar its reputation and financial success.

"The best machinery, the amplest supply of labour, the most liberal expenditure of capital, are all insufficient unless there be skill and experience to guide, direct, and control the whole.

"A good manager understands what he is about, controls his native helpers, knows what good tea is and how to produce it, is fully acquainted with the requirements of the market and the needs of the people for whom he grows his tea."

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THIRD.

On the Adulteration of Tea. Scented Teas often poisonous. Indian Tea the tea of the future.

TO write on the subject of adulteration, or to lay bare the tricks of the tea trade to the gaze of an interested public, is by no means a very pleasant task. It is like sitting at a court martial on some wretched creature, whom, although you cannot help pitying, you sincerely despise, and who is pretty sure of being flogged if he isn't hanged. It is a disagreeable duty; and indeed many an unfortunate fellow has been lashed at the triangles, or run up to the yard-arm's end, that did not deserve punishment half so much as those do who adulterate our food and drink. In war times what are called "looters" are usually shot, and serve them right as a rule; but these men compare favourably with adulterators of comestibles. There are several points of resemblance between them to be sure; for both rob you of your money, and neither are very particular whether they take your life or not. But, whereas the looter robs and pillages under the broad and searching light of the sun, the adulterator is worse than any thieving area sneak; he works at night in his dimly lighted

lighted cellar, and if a mouse but moves while he is adding chicory to his coffee, or the "doctor" to his beer, the flabby morsel of a muscle he has for a heart, beats as if the arch fiend were coming down the back stairs to fly off with him, body and soul.

It is an undoubted fact that there is really no adulteration practised on Indian teas abroad. The Chinese on the other hand have elevated the art almost into a science.* They are adepts at the work, professionals, most skilled and learned manipulators. But then they are not bound to account to our laws and legislators for what they do; and if a Chinese tea adulterator possesses such a thing as a conscience, and this conscience dares to speak up and hint to its owner that he is not behaving quite fairly, we may easily imagine Ah Sing replying in the following strain:

"What I sell the British merchant is tea, it is tcha. *Tcha* is a mixture of dried and fired leaves. This is that mixture. He asks for it, he looks at it, likes it, buys it, pays as little money as he can for it. What is the British merchant to me? Fuff! He

* The government analyst attached to the Customs department certifies that he has met "with no case of adulteration in Indian tea." On the other hand the official report of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Customs for last year states that over a thousand packages of China tea were refused admission to this country, as being unfit for human food.

takes the tea, that is his 'pigeon.' I take the gold, that is my 'pigeon,' aha!"

The Chinese tea men, or tea women, whether planters, cultivators, gatherers, sellers, buyers, re-sellers, or re-buyers, are far from particular, as we have already seen, in the matter of *cleanliness*, while manipulating the herb that finally finds its way into the dainty cups and saucers of England's fair daughters. The hygiene of the person is a subject but little studied anywhere around Canton; this is a fact that is best forgotten, but it will do us good rather than otherwise to know something about the kinds of adulterations usually practised by the celestials; we may thus avoid them.

"On the testimony of the House of Commons," says Mr. Baildon, "millions of pounds of sloe, liquorice, and ash leaves are every year mixed with Chinese teas for the English market."

We have however the authority of Dr. Hassall, *vide* his excellent work on "Food and its Adulterations," * for stating that the congous and souchongs consumed in this country are, as a rule, free from admixtures of foreign leaves and other adulterations, and that when found it is most commonly in samples of low priced and much broken teas, and in the lower qualities of black and green gunpowder teas, in Twankay tea, and in Lie tea.

Dr. Dixon, who wrote in the *Penny Cyclopædia*, however tells us that the Chinese dry annually many millions of pounds of the

* Published by Messrs. Longmans & Green.

leaves

leaves of different plants, to mingle with genuine tea leaves, such as those of the plum, ash, willow, etc., etc. While the tea trade was entirely in the hands of the East India Company few of these adulterated teas were shipped for this country, as experienced and competent inspectors were kept at Canton to prevent the shipment of such in the Company's vessels; but since the trade has been opened up all kinds find a ready outlet, and as the demand for tea exceeds the supply a manufactured article is furnished to the rival crews.

What is so well named "Lie tea" is for the most part not tea at all. "It is," says Dr. Hassall, "no doubt in some cases made up in part of the *dust* of *tea leaves*, but often of foreign leaves, sand, quartz, and magnetic oxide of iron, all these being made up with great skill and ingenuity, by means of a solution of starch, into little masses of various sizes and shapes in imitation of different kinds of tea. These masses, if intended for the adulteration of ordinary black tea, such as congou, are not faced; but if designed to imitate caper or Shulan tea, they are coated with plumbago or black lead, and if gunpowder with Prussian blue, turmeric, China clay, or other white mineral powder. The cleverness exhibited in the manufacture of the different kinds of Lie tea is something really surprising, and so close is the imitation in many cases that much practice and skill are required for their detection."

It is nevertheless gratifying to learn that there is a better and a worse description of Lie tea, and that the former consists of little else save real tea dust, combined with—here the "lie" comes in—foreign leaves. It is still more gratifying to be told that although over a million pounds of Lie teas are imported into this country annually, the celestials are not altogether to blame, for they manufacture them to meet the demand of English brokers, and candidly name them Lie Flower Caper, or Lie Gunpowder, as the case may be.

As the market value of these spurious teas is only about ninepence a pound, or threepence in bond (*i.e.*, before the duty of sixpence per pound is paid), after they have been judiciously mixed with an otherwise adulterated tea, somebody or other must pocket pretty fair profit.

The magnet tells a tale when introduced to some of these Chinese teas, to the tune of five per cent. and over of the magnetic oxide of iron; the same specimens of tea usually showing a goodly percentage of sand and quartz. Both black and green teas, but especially the latter, are faced by the virtuous John Chinaman, the object being to give the article so operated on a captivating colour. Dr. Hassall states that the Oolong tea of China, which is in reality a green tea though described as a black, is free from colouring material. Virtuous John again! and the doctor says also, much to the credit of the aforesaid John, that

that samples of uncoloured Chinese green tea have occasionally, of recent years, been brought under his notice, and further that the Indian green teas are almost always free from colouring matter.

But we must now leave John Chinaman alone. We cannot say that he leaves the court without a stain on his character; it bears the stain of black lead, turmeric, and Prussian blue, but we are glad to find even an alloy of goodness in his character, as we do of quartz and sand and iron and willow leaves in his tea; he has the boldness to call one product of his genius by the right name, namely Lie tea, *alias* humbug, and we find his Oolong free from facing. Another charge against him, that of re-drying and doctoring tea leaves that have already done duty in his own country, and sending them over to display their virtues in ours, will not be proceeded with; and this for obvious reasons. It is absurd of the kettle to find fault with the colour of the pot, and the re-dried-tea-leaves trade is really a branch of industry in Britain as well as in China. The reduction of duty however has, to a large extent, put a stop to the practice of adulteration of teas at home. It does not pay; but if it did, why then——

But it used to be a very common practice, (which is not yet altogether abandoned, as many a London detective could prove to us,) to collect exhausted tea leaves, to mix them with a solution of gum, catechu, and sulphate of iron, and to re-dry them. The gum

gum supplied in a measure the place of the extractive matter removed from the leaves by their previous use, and the catechu and the sulphate of iron gave the solution astringency and colour.

Another practice was to collect the leaves of different plants, to break them up, to mix them with catechu, and to granulate the mixture in imitation of the Lie tea of the Chinese, which has already been described.

These masses were finally coated either black or green, in imitation of black or green gunpowder teas, with a variety of pigmentary substances, some of them of a highly poisonous character.

It is interesting to know that among the leaves used to adulterate tea in England *were* or *are*, according to indisputable authority, sloe, beech, box, elm, horse chestnut, plane, bastard plane, fancy oak, willow, poplar, hawthorn, and sycamore; while for facing purposes a variety of poisonous substances were used, such as rose pink, Dutch pink, chromate of lead, Venetian red, arsenite of copper, indigo, etc., etc.

For the detection of the various adulterations of tea, a special knowledge of chemistry is indispensable, and of botany as well, so far as the appearance of the different varieties of real tea leaves is concerned, and that of the leaves mentioned above as more commonly used for mixing with tea. Both the microscope and the magnet have also to be called in to assist in the diagnosis of

tea

tea, and with every aid and assistance imaginable the detection of adulteration is at times very difficult.

What then, it may be asked, is the British tea drinker to do? Is he to give up drinking tea altogether, or go on using it, calmly indifferent to either dirt or adulteration? No need to do either. If we buy our teas wholesale, let us do so from firms of known respectability. If retail from the family grocer, let us first find out, before purchasing a single pound of it, where he deals, where he procures his mixture. Let us make up our minds whether it is best to drink all Chinese, a mixture of Chinese fortified and flavoured with Indian, or Indian alone in all its purity.

A tea that has a nice aroma is very captivating to the olfactory nerves of the British tea drinker. The Chinese have found that out long long ago.

Let us hear what Mr. Samuel Ball has to say about scented Chinese teas, premising that a Chinaman himself would no more think of using a badly or *fictitiously* scented tea than a genuine Highlander would a scented snuff; only common tea requires scenting, just as a good wine needs no bush.

"There are however," says Mr. Ball, "many scented teas which, so far from being inferior, are much esteemed both in China and Europe. Of these the Chu Lan, or cowslip hyson, may be considered the best.

"I shall therefore now explain the manner in which I have seen this

this process performed; which indeed does not differ greatly from that practised nine hundred years ago, as described in the Kaun-Fang-Pu, a Chinese herbal. The flowers may be gathered at any time of the day, but those are considered the best and most fragrant which are gathered while the dew is still on the leaves.

"The tea about to be scented is taken still hot from the last roasting, which immediately precedes the packing, and poured into a hyson chest so as to form a layer of two inches in height from the bottom. A handful or more of the fresh flowers already separated from the stalks is then strewed over the tea. In this manner the tea and flowers are placed in layers until the chest is full. The mouth of the canister is then closed, and thus the tea remains for twenty-four hours. The next day the chest is emptied, when the tea and flowers are mixed together. They then undergo the process of *poey*, about three catties being put in one sieve. The *poey long* is completely closed, and the tea and flowers thus roasted until the flowers become crisp. The flowers are then sifted out, and the tea packed.

"If the tea requires any further scenting, fresh flowers may be used and the process repeated as before. The tea thus prepared is then mixed with other tea in the proportion of one part of scented to twenty of plain. The whole is then slightly heated in a vessel, and when packed constitutes the description of tea often called in England cowslip hyson.

"The

"The mode of scenting black tea differs from that of green, and there are two or three methods of performing the process.

"The flowers of the *Chloranthus inconspicuus* are dried, but not so as to destroy the colour. When cool they are powdered, and thus mixed with teas to scent them.

"Other souchongs are scented with the petals of *Olea fragrans* and *Jasaminum Sumbac.* and probably with those of other flowers."

If the flowers used to scent Chinese teas were always harmless in their nature, we could afford to forgive the celestials for the practised deceit. Unfortunately however they are often highly poisonous, or used in poisonous proportions, so that upon the whole the British housewife, in her search for a decent cup of tea, had as well give mixtures with a too seductive aroma a very wide berth.

Perhaps the best way after all of steering clear of both filth and poisonous adulteration would be to use only pure Indian teas, and to see that we got them.

From all we have seen both at home and abroad, from all we have read, and from all we can learn, Indian tea is *the tea of the future.*

"We have to look," says Sir Walter Medhurst, the British consul at Shanghai, in one of his official reports, "to India for the perfection of tea culture; there planting, firing, and packing are all in one hand, and the needful capital outlay to produce a good result

result is not spared. In China these desiderata are absent altogether, and the proceedings are in the primitive and unscientific style dear to the natives of this country. Nothing, it may be safely advanced, but the introduction of European capital and enterprise into the tea districts will save the foreign tea trade of China from decay."

CHAPTER

CHAPTER FOURTH.

India and England. The progress of Tea culture in India. Assam as a field of emigration for young men.

THE English are noted all the world over for their love of fair play. We will never be found decrying the Chinaman and his teas, simply because he is a Chinaman and a foreigner, nor upholding the Indian tea planter and merchant, because he is a countryman and a brother. We will not be found buying Indian teas and using them in our homes, simply for the sake of helping and assisting our fellow subjects in Cachar or Assam.

India may address Britannia as follows :

"You can help us and benefit yourselves by making entire use of our Indian tea. You help us by giving us more extended employment; you set in motion a vast machinery of occupation, in growing, cultivating, preparing, packing, transporting, shipping; you enable us to draw out of the soil that which will do you good; the money you pay for it helps to make us better off, lightens our taxation, feeds, clothes, supports us; we can buy, from you, articles that will help to make your factories busy and

your

your ships full. We are all one—one sovereignty, one queen or empress. Our interests are identical; we are one. Will you not therefore help us, by helping yourselves and using our productions, especially when we furnish you with a better, cheaper, healthier, purer article than you have been getting from our neighbours the Chinese?"

And Britannia will reply:

"No need, dear sister, to appeal to us in language such as this. There is a begging twang in it, that we do not half like. We will *not* help you simply because we are the same kith and kin, the same flesh and blood. We must be fair; we will help you by buying your teas as long as they are good and pure and unadulterated, but this is not by way of granting a favour; it is only what is due to you, and by helping you thus we are but benefiting ourselves. But, depend upon it, we will keep a sharp look out on our China trade and our China teas; for if there be one thing in the world we English thoroughly hate, it is being swindled, and adulteration is a bitter bitter pill to swallow."

The following extract from a letter from Melbourne shows that the Indian tea merchants are possessed of plenty of bold business-like tact.

"A long discussion on the adulteration of China teas occupied the attention of the press for a month or so, and we took advantage of this agitation to bring our Indian teas prominently into notice

notice; and amongst other means we had all the sample packages to be offered for sale on the 4th, opened in the presence of our leading analytical chemists, Messrs. Cosmo Newbery and Dunn, (who have devoted considerable attention to the analysis of tea,) and we obtained from them a certificate of the analysis of our teas, and a guarantee of their purity, which you will find at the back of the tea catalogue sent you. We also had the bulk of the new China tea analysed, in order to give a comparison of the two classes of tea from the chemist's point of view.

"In Melbourne we have made a strong point of analysing Indian against China teas, and think it one of the most powerful supports we have had in favour of Indian teas."

One would naturally imagine that, on reading the above, a Chinese tea merchant would scratch his head and begin to wonder whether after all honesty were not the best policy.

Meanwhile Indian tea planters are working hard to make their tea better than it has ever been before. They know it is to their interest to send home teas of superior quality; that indeed it is better for them to study quality than quantity, for a time at all events.

There is little doubt that the palates of the public are getting, if I may so phrase it, educated to the taste of choice Indian teas, and we venture to predict that, before many years are over, nothing else will be used at afternoon teas in good society. So far already have Indian teas found favour with the public, that

few people who really like good tea care for any which is not mixed or blended with teas from Indian districts.

In ten years the consumption of Indian tea has increased 255 per cent., *i.e.* from an average of 1,140,000 lbs. to 4,050,000 lbs. per month, while the consumption of China tea has only increased about 1½ per cent., *i.e.* from 9,150,000 lbs. per month in 1871 to about an average of 9,300,000 lbs. Ten years ago the consumption of Indian tea was 11 per cent. of our total supply, and now it is 30 per cent.; while that of China tea was 89 per cent., and at present is only 70 per cent.

The average monthly consumption in this country, year by year, and the per centage to the total supply, of Indian and China teas, have been as follows :—

	Indian.		China.		
	lbs.	per cent.	lbs.	per cent.	Total lbs.
1871	1,141,000	11	9,153,000	89	10,294,000
1872	1,388,000	13	9,362,000	87	10,750,000
1873	1,506,000	14	9,494,000	86	11,000,000
1874	1,503,000	13	9,949,000	87	11,452,000
1875	1,868,000	16	10,253,000	84	12,121,000
1876	2,145,000	17	10,282,000	83	12,427,000
1877	2,321,000	18	10,385,000	82	12,606,000
1878	3,062,000	23	10,079,000	77	13,141,000
1879	2,841,000	21	10,546,000	79	13,387,000
1880	3,653,000	28	9,561,000	72	13,214,000
1881	4,052,000	30	9,301,000	70	13,353,000

It

It will be seen that during the last two years the consumption of China tea has fallen off about 12 per cent., from 10½ million lbs. per month during 1879 to 9,300,000 lbs. in 1881. On the other hand, the deliveries of Indian tea have risen about 43 per cent., from 2,840,000 lbs. in 1879 to over 4,000,000 lbs. per month in 1881.

"It may not be out of place to give a brief statement of the progress of tea culture in India during the last thirty years. In 1850 the area under plant may be approximately estimated at not more than 1,000 acres, and the total out-turn of tea at little over 250,000 lbs. At the present time the area under plant may be put down for:

Assam	85,000	acres.
Cachar	47,000	,,
Sylhet	18,000	,,
Darjeeling and Terai	34,000	,,
Dehra Doon	4,300	,,
Kangra Valley	7,400	,,
Kumaon	4,400	,,
Chittagong	4,200	,,
Chota Nagpore	3,300	,,
Total	207,600	,,

Producing about 50,000,000 lbs. of prepared tea, and representing a capital invested not far short of fifteen millions sterling, while about two millions sterling are spent annually in India in the

the working and upkeep of the plantations. Of the advantages accruing to India, directly to the people and indirectly to the government, from the disbursement of so large an amount of money there can be no question. It will be seen that, of the total area of 207,600 acres brought under cultivation, 150,000 acres lie within the administrative circle of the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

"It is a question deserving the consideration of government whether a certain amount of direct expenditure applied to promoting immigration into Assam would not prove reproductive in the truest sense, by stimulating the productive capabilities of the province, and by contributing to the reduction of future expenditure, in connection with famines in other parts of the empire less favoured by nature.

"Tea culture alone, apart from other products, is capable of almost indefinite expansion. Land and capital can be found in abundance, and the sole impediment to its continuous development is the difficulty of obtaining an adequate supply of labour on terms admitting of its profitable employment. This hindrance to progress does not arise from the inability of the industry, to afford the wages necessary to render labour highly remunerative to the immigrant, but from the excessive cost of recruitment and transport, largely due, in the opinion of all tea growers, to the stringency of the labour laws."

We

We quote the above from a memorial on the subject presented to the Government of India by the INDIAN TEA DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION, a body representing the tea interest at home.

Just a few hints to young men who may possibly be meditating emigration to the tea districts in order to push their fortunes. They would naturally like to know something before they start, or even made up their minds to start, of the kind of life they would have to lead, and of their chances of success. For the benefit of any such then, I cull the following extracts from *Chambers's Journal*, to which we have had the honour of being an occasional contributor for many years.

"The ordinary terms," says Chota-wallah, "on which assistants are engaged are: that they pay their own passage out to the garden, and agree to serve for three years, receiving as salary one hundred rupees, or say ten pounds, per month during the first, one hundred and fifty rupees per month for the second, and two hundred rupees for the third year. For India this seems small pay for even a beginner; but, up country, fowls and ducks, which take the place of butcher's meat during the greater part of the year, are very cheap; and the tea garden assistant, if he does not live with some senior man during his first year, and pay him a moderate sum for mess, has a bungalow provided, so that he has no rent to pay; a horse kept for him, and the wages of a groom (syce), watchman (chowkedar), water carrier (pani-wallah), and a gardener

gardener (malee), paid by the estate. Most new hands get one man at say ten or twelve rupees per month, who will cook and also wait at table, till they can afford more. Thus the only wages the young assistant has to pay for the first year or two are his khansama's ten or twelve rupees, six rupees to the washerman, and say two rupees out of his own pocket to make the chowkedar look to his clothes a little. Although a native will both cook and wait at table for a man just out, they do not like the duties being combined, and look on one who can afford two employing but one, as mean and not sahib-like; so that you may almost say a man has to increase the number, or at all events the pay, of his personal servants as his own salary is increased. The following is something like a list of men attached as personal servants to a European in charge of a garden: one cook, one table servant, one bearer, one washerman, one punkah-wallah (often dispensed with), one syce, one grass cutter, one man to bring firewood, one water carrier, and one dâk-wallah or letter carrier; of whom the first five are private servants, the others being provided by the estate."

This list of servants, we may remark parenthetically, is somewhat stretched.

"To return to the fresh assistant. He pays, as we have seen, twenty rupees per month for servants, and has eighty rupees left to keep him; and on this, with care, as he will have brought

a stock of clothes with him, he may live quite comfortably if he does not drink beer (a costly item in a planter's house account), which a healthy young fellow just out from home cannot really require. In his second year he will be able to afford a bottle of beer or pint of claret with his breakfast or dinner, which will do him no harm. In a climate like Assam, where there is so much wear and tear on the constitution, a little stimulant, after a man has been two or three years in the country, is beneficial; while the man who drinks to excess will soon suffer, both in health and pocket; for proprietors will soon get rid of a man who neglects their work, as one who exceeds must. Men in coming out first usually leave home about October, and get up to Assam during December, when the weather is delightfully cool, in fact superior to a fine English summer; for we have fires at night and in the early morning from November to the end of February. Coming at this season, besides getting accustomed to the heat as it comes on gradually, the new arrival sees the first steps in the making of a tea garden."

From our own personal experience of India, we cannot hold with Chota-wallah that it is a good plan to take stimulants, either with breakfast or dinner. If his constitution be so weakly that he cannot bear the climate without wine in the morning, far better for him he had stopped at home wheat farming, instead of taking up life as a tea planter.

"The

"The planters of a dozen years ago," Chota-wallah continues, "had to endure many hardships at first; but the assistant now-a-days walks into a comfortable bungalow on a settled garden, with good communication with the river Brahmapootra, and neighbours who, now that there are so many gardens in the district, are seldom very far distant. But though decidedly better than it was a few years ago, and steadily improving, let no young fellow suppose he is coming to an Eldorado where, in three or four years, he is sure to have made enough to enable him to retire. In Assam we have a very bad climate, and what money is made is accumulated only by those who work hard and attend to their business, and doubtless at the cost of a certain number of years of life. Although there is nothing like the former amount of jungle fever, there are very few who do not suffer at intervals from fever and ague; and to many this sticks even after they leave the country for good."

This is quite true, but the climate of Assam on the whole is better than Bengal. The heat is not so unendurable, and the nights often deliciously cool and refreshing.

"Now that I have satisfied the 'would-be' planter that there are drawbacks to a life in the jungle, it will be as well to give him some notion of the work. Suppose we begin at say six o'clock on a 'rains' morning, when, having had his cup of tea and toast, the assistant will take a turn round the 'lines,' to see that

that the people are going out to work; then a look into his leaf house, to see whether the 'green leaf' plucked the previous day be ready for rolling or not; and then, if he has no native doctor, he returns to the bungalow, in front of which will be ranged all the sick people waiting for medicine. A man always knows when to give a dose of castor oil or one of chlorodyne, and generally to prescribe for any simple ailment; and a manager always does well to be careful of the health of his people. The writer has often been ill in Assam, and has found his native servants most attentive nurses, and consequently cannot sympathise with those who talk of the 'nigger' as so much our inferior as to be insensible of kindness. Fortunately, self interest prevents the natives being ill treated to any extent by the few who might be inclined to use them ill, for coolies are not slaves, and will not remain where they are not well treated. The sick people seen to, the planter goes through the garden to see that the coolies are plucking and hoeing properly, and will probably stay among them till 10.30; when he will have another look to see that all is going on right in the tea house, before returning to the bungalow for a bath and breakfast. Between breakfast and four p.m. he will pay frequent visits to the tea house, and also get through any writing he may have to do. After four o'clock it will be cool enough for another turn round the garden, to see what has been done during the day, and also what he will put his

his people to do on the morrow. In the evening he will pay his coolies for extra work done during the day; for regular work they are paid monthly. About seven he will dine; and then a couple of pipes and an hour's reading generally fit him for bed. Men living alone rarely sit up late; the day's work is fairly heavy, and there are few amusements. In the cold weather there is no tea-house work; but pruning, clearing, planting and transplanting, building and road making, fully occupy the European's attention."

There is good shooting to be got in Assam, for in some parts elephant and rhinoceros, buffalo, bears, leopards, and tigers abound, and snipe and other birds as well.

There is just the one drawback, the somewhat unhealthy climate; just that one terror, the fever and ague. But be it remembered that as it is getting every year more improved, India is getting more and more healthy. A young man going to India from this country has simply to take care of himself. He must live regularly and temperately, and avoid getting wet, *either outside or in.*

Those who require further information on this subject should read a paper in *Chambers's Journal* for Sept. 25th, 1880; or a book published by Messrs. Allen & Co., 13, Waterloo Place, London. Both are well worthy of perusal.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER FIFTH.

Good tea: its beneficial effects on the health of the constant consumer—Tea as a medicine—The evil effects of over indulgence—Adulterations injurious to the health.

WHAT are the effects on the health of the individual, who indulges moderately in the daily use of good and unadulterated tea?

What are the uses of tea medicinally considered?

Are the adulterations most commonly found in tea likely to have a deleterious effect on the constitution?

What are the effects upon the system of over indulgence in tea?

These are questions which have an interest for every member of the community, as well as for the nation at large; and every thinking person will endeavour to find an answer for them. The people of England have been tea drinkers universally for considerably over two hundred years, and during that time they certainly have not degenerated either mentally or bodily. Our women are still the fairest of the fair, our men still as brave as brave can be in the field; not only are our writers and artists

still

still as clever, and our statesmen quite as able, as in the good old times, but genius is on the increase. Our tea drinking then has certainly not lowered us as a nation. Our march is steadily onwards, and "Progress" and "Enlightenment" are the words inscribed on our banners. Other peoples and countries are left far behind us in the race. Notably the Chinese, one of the most ancient races on the face of the earth—so ancient indeed that it seems to be in its dotage; while on the other hand the Japanese, who, by the way, are quite as fond of tea as a beverage as the Chinese are, have taken up our cry of "Forward," and are following fast in our wake. One thing at least must be said in favour of tea drinking; it is conducive to sobriety; it thus indirectly tends to increase the health of the nation and to lower the death-rate.

But it is the effects of the habit of tea drinking on the individual, which we have at present to consider.

The cup of delicate Darjeeling that we so love to sip, after the bracing, refreshing plunge in the morning tub; the cup that banishes from our brains the lingering shadows of the night that has fled, and in which we drown the last faint remembrance of our dreams: do we do wrong to drink it?

Those cups of sturdy Assam—we positively must have two—that seem such an aid to digestion, that make breakfast however humble seem a banquet; that set us up for the day, and cause

us

us to feel contented, happy, and hopeful, and eager to be off in bus or train, on foot or on cycle, to begin work: are they injurious to the health?

Is the cup that cheers us when the day's labour is nearly done, and we are beginning to feel weary and somewhat limp and jaded withal; the cup that cheers and refreshes us, and calms the mind and rouses our dormant powers: is this cup a delusion and a snare? In a word, is the teakettle an enchantress, that sings syren-like on the hob, only to lure us on the rocks of indigestion, to the shipwreck of all our hopes and our health itself?

On the contrary. We may reply, all experience goes to prove that good tea, drank judiciously and in moderation, is positively beneficial to the health. It would serve no useful purpose to enter minutely into the physiological effects of tea on the system; suffice it to say that they depend chiefly on three of the active principles or constituents of the leaf: (1) the *volatile oil*; (2) the *theine*; and (3) the *tannin*.

The *volatile oil* is more abundant in new tea; and this, according to Professor Johnstone, accounts for the fact that in China tea is rarely used until it is a year old, owing to the peculiarly intoxicating effect which the leaves of the plant, when newly gathered, seem to possess. The volatile oil is to some extent lost by keeping. Only to some extent however, for in due

proportion it is very grateful to the palate and the senses, and acts as a stimulant to the nervous system, and a sedative to the mind.

The *theine*, it has been proved by experiment, diminishes the waste of tissue in the body. Tea thus makes a most valuable adjunct to the dietary; for if the waste of tissue be lessened, less food is required. We see therefore that the "high tea" of the labouring poor has common sense to speak in favour of it. But this power of checking waste of tissue that lies in tea makes it eminently suitable as a beverage for people of the nervo-sanguineous temperament, those individuals whose lives seem all bustle and action, who probably eat a fair proportion of food but who never "put on flesh" as it is called, fat were a better name. To this class belong the busy bees of this world, the brain workers, those men of energy and mind that the state could ill afford to want. The constant wear and tear of the nervous system, in such people, necessitates some means of vital compensation; and tea is eminently suited for such a purpose.

The *tannin* contained in tea is simply mildly astringent, and may, or we ought to say does, have a slightly constipating effect on the bowels; but it is only when the tea is allowed to draw too long a time that the *tannin* is extracted.

Let us quote the words of two or three worthy men in support of our belief that tea is beneficial to the health.

Hear

Hear Dr. Lo-Yu. Lo-Yu flourished in China more than a thousand years ago, and was wise in his day and generation. We cannot be certain that he was not a friend and acquaintance of Prince Djarma himself. At all events he found out from experience something of the virtues, that lie latent in the leaves of the tea plant, till charmed forth by water at boiling point. "Tea," he said, "tempers the spirits, calms and harmonizes the mind; it dispels every feeling of weariness and banishes fatigue; it arouses thought and prevents drowsiness, lightens and refreshes the body, and clears the perceptive faculties."

Hear Professor Johnstone: "Tea," says the learned professor, "exhilarates without insensibly intoxicating. It excites the brain to increased activity and produces wakefulness. Hence its usefulness to hard students, to those who have vigils to keep, and to persons who have to labour much with the head. It soothes on the contrary and stills the vascular system."

"Tea," says Bentley, "diminishes the tendency to sleep, while it appears to possess a sedative influence with regard to the vascular system."

We might go on quoting from good authors and learned men until this little volume were a perfect cube, or "square all round," as an Irishman would say. We have no intention of making a cube of it however, but cannot resist giving just one more quotation.

"It

"It is beyond dispute," Dr. Day remarks in his "Food Papers," "that all classes of the community in this country have derived much benefit from the persistent use of tea. It has proved and still proves a highly prized boon to millions.

"The artist at his easel, the author at his desk, the statesman fresh from an exhaustive oration, the actor from the stage after fulfilling an arduous rôle, the orator from the platform, the preacher from the pulpit, the toiling mechanic, the wearied labourer, the poor governess, the tired laundress, the humble cottage housewife, even the votary of pleasure on escaping from the scene of revelry, nay the queen on her throne, have one and all to acknowledge and express gratitude for the grateful and invigorating infusion."

A nutritive action has been ascribed to tea owing to the fact that it contains gluten. It certainly does so, but most if not all of this principle remains in the leaves; being undissolved by the boiling water, unless indeed carbonate of soda has been put in the teapot, an addition which, as we state elsewhere, is not to be recommended. Tea leaves after use are often given to rabbits, they get the benefit of the gluten.

Although tea hardly finds a place in the Pharmacopœia, still in many cases it may be looked upon as a very valuable medicine indeed.

Its sedative effect on the vascular system is well seen when administered

administered for the cure of certain kinds of *headaches*, that depend upon a congested state of the brain or its membranes. Over anxiety produces those headaches, so does watching by night, and everything indeed that strains the brain and over-stretches its capillaries, indiscretion in the matter of stimulants among the number.

Headaches are sometimes apt to so derange the system as to produce sickness and vomiting; a cup or two of good tea slowly sipped, and not drank too hot or with too much sugar and milk, banishes all feeling of nausea, and often prevents a fit of severe retching and vomiting. This is doing a great deal indeed, for retching once commenced is not only difficult to stop, but by the strain it puts upon the stomach, liver, and indeed all the viscera, it may produce mischief that it will take days if not weeks to recover from.

In *nervous headaches* tea is also beneficial. Tea may be used with advantage in many cases where digitalis is of efficacy, and there is no danger of the active principle of tea, namely the theine, being accumulated in the system as is sometimes the case with digitaline.

In cases of *intermittent fever*, and of fever with debility, tea forms an excellent medicine; its action in this case being somewhat analogous to that of quinine.

In *neuralgia* and also in *toothache* tea does good, and in all cases

cases where there is loss of nervous power and consequent exhaustion.

Its cheering, refreshing, warming, and calmative effects are well shown when taken for the relief of *colds* and *coughs*. In these cases the addition of a good allowance of both milk or cream and sugar adds to the beneficial effects.

People who are subject to *gout* and *rheumatism* may use tea with advantage, though it should not be taken too strong, the object being to obtain its diuretic action. It may also act specifically on these disorders, but of this the writer has no proof.

Strong tea counteracts the evil effects of *poisoning* by *alcohol*, after as much has been removed from the stomach as possible, by means of emetics followed by draughts of warm water.

A strong infusion is also administered in cases of *poisoning* by *tartar emetic*, and even *arsenic*.

But it is after all as an aid to digestion and a preventive of dyspepsia, that the beneficial results of the regular use of good tea are best seen. There is no doubt that it strengthens the stomach and corrects any tendency to diarrhœa.

Writing on the subject of indigestion in *Chambers's Journal* for January 21st, 1882, Mr. Andrew W. Tuer makes the following happy observations.

"Glycerine as recommended by Dr. Sidney Ringar and Dr. W. Murrell

Murrell in the *Lancet* as a cure for flatulence, acidity, and pyrosis, is not only an antiseptic or ferment killer agreeable to take, but appears to possess the singular quality of passing through the digestive organs unchanged.

"A drachm of glycerine mixed in half a wineglass full of water is to be swallowed with or immediately after each meal, until the enemy takes to flight, which in an ordinary case will be in from one to two days, and in an obstinate one perhaps a fortnight. Sooner or later, unless the predisposing causes are removed, another attack will follow, and the glycerine will have to be resumed.

"'Predisposing causes' having been referred to, it must now be the endeavour to find out what they are, so that a perfect cure may be effected and the glycerine discarded altogether. One's own common sense would suggest that food known to disagree should be avoided. Indigestion is often set up at the earliest, and, to the dyspeptic, the lightest meal of the day, at which he probably confines himself to crisp toast buttered as soon as cold, bread and butter with a very lightly boiled egg, or a little fat bacon, the whole moistened with a little tea. In the word just used, 'moistened,' probably lies the 'predisposing cause.' The food, when only half chewed, is moistened with a sip of tea to expedite its departure to the stomach; but to ensure its digestion, be it ever so simple, the food must be thoroughly masticated and receive

receive during the process the necessary moisture from the saliva. Food should be swallowed without any extraneous aid in a liquid form, *and ought never to be washed down.* A sip of tea may be taken between the bites, but not when there is food in the mouth, *of which a fair quantity ought to be disposed of before the tea is even thought of.* The tea itself, by being slowly sipped, receives its share of the saliva, and is rendered more digestible. And this assertion is borne out by the fact that many persons who cannot digest milk, when gulped or drunk down quickly, readily do so when it is slowly sipped.

"The habit of taking one's breakfast in the manner recommended is so very easily acquired that after the first trial no inconvenience will be felt; in fact, the food will be enjoyed and the pleasure of the meal greatly increased. Indiscretions committed at the dinner table are credited as the cause of many dyspeptic attacks; but probably more may be traced to the pernicious habit indicated and indulged in, by so many persons, at breakfast and tea.

"A final hint as to the tea at breakfast. The epicurean method of making it, and that we believe practised by professional tea-tasters, is to put a single spoonful, let it be of the best and without any admixture of green, into a breakfast cup, which is filled up with boiling water, covered with a plate or saucer, and allowed to stand for three minutes only, when, after decanting into another cup

cup, so as to dispose of the leaves, which will remain behind, the tea is made. Sugar is added to taste, and lastly milk, and very little if any of it. Tea made in this manner is not only most deliciously aromatic, but most digestible; for the bitter tannin, which is apt to harden, literally to tan, the food in the stomach, is left behind."

Tea does good in mild cases of *diarrhœa* owing to the astringent properties of the tannin, and also in cases of inflammatory action in almost any organ, owing to the power its active constituents possess of allaying vascular excitement.

Although a cup or two of strong tea tends to wakefulness, still the after effects are in our opinion in some degree narcotic. In cases of *sleeplessness* therefore tea may be freely drank in the fore part of the evening; all its stimulating agency will have passed away before bedtime, and its sedative alone will remain.

Over indulgence in tea, it has been proved again and again, is most deleterious to the system. "There is probably no substance," says an eminent authority, "not strictly medicinal, which exerts so powerful an influence on the nervous system as tea, especially the green variety, of which many people cannot take even the smallest quantity without experiencing the most disagreeable effects; they become faint, the action of the nervous system is disturbed, the hand trembles, the heart palpitates, sometimes gastric spasm is induced, but more generally a feeling of

of raking of the stomach and of extreme hunger after a full meal. There are some persons upon whom green tea produces the same effect as digitalis; and it has been medicinally employed in the diseases for which that herb has deservedly obtained a high reputation. Desbois, of Rochefort, has by the use of it cured many nervous diseases which have arisen from accelerated circulation. Dr. Percival had an idea that green tea possessed nearly the same power of controlling the heart's action as digitalis."

The effects of over indulgence in tea are to induce a peculiar state of the brain as well as the whole nervous and vascular system. According to Professor Johnstone, there ensues, if too much tea be taken daily for some time, excitement of the imagination, with, after a while, wandering of the thoughts, and a strange kind of intoxication of a most unpleasant kind, which symptoms are followed by and pass off in a deep sleep.

"Green tea," says the professor, "acts very powerfully upon some constitutions, producing nervous tremblings and other distressing symptoms, acting as a narcotic, and in inferior animals even producing paralysis." Its exciting effect upon the nerves makes it useful in counteracting the effects of opium and fermented liquors, and the stupor sometimes induced by fever.

Teatasters at times suffer from headaches and attacks of giddiness, and these are by some put down to the effects of the tea; but this we think is doubtful. The *post hoc propter hoc* line of

of argument is a bad one at the best. We have heard it said that tea drinking induced attacks of gravel, but we have had no proof of this.

A tea drunkard is a *rara avis*, but we have seen a few specimens in our time. One lady in particular we remember: the teapot was her constant companion; she drank tea hot thrice a day with her meals, and cold all day long in the interims, and for anything we know she tippled at night as well. She was a kind of an authoress in a small way, for she contributed milk and water verses for the parish magazine; thus was her fame noised abroad, and she was well known everywhere within a radius of five miles of her own village. She even contributed articles at times to the Balaam box of London magazines. She did not apparently enjoy good health however, her eyes seemed supernaturally big, her cheek bones abnormally high, and in complexion she was as delicate as a dying marigold. She was not the authoress of the beautiful song, "Ever of thee," but she might have parodied it and sung:

Ever on tea I'm fondly beaming,
One soothing cup my sad heart can cheer;
All, all, alone! nor sugar nor cream in,
To mar thy rich beauty and fragrance so dear.
Ah, ah-h-h!
Morning, noon, and night, where'er I may be,
Fondly I 'm dreaming ever on tea.

As

As to the effects of the adulterations introduced into tea on the health of the consumer, we need say but little. Many of them are poisonous, but seldom probably used in dangerous quantities. In other words they are seldom present in allopathically-injurious doses, but one cannot be blamed if he grumbles at being dosed even homœopathically all the year round with willow leaves, French chalk, China clay, Prussian blue, and indigo. We are willing to admit that black lead is a very excellent application for the outside of the kitchen range, but doubt whether the inside of the human stomach can be benefited by it. On the other hand quartz and sand, so often found in China teas, may be necessaries of life with Cochin cocks and cassowaries, but then Cochin cocks and cassowaries have gizzards, John Bull has not. He has teeth instead. The celestials would do well to bear this in mind while mixing teas for the British barbarian.

"Dr. Morton, of New York, has for a considerable time past been devoting his attention to the properties of tea. He has made a most minute study of the effects induced on the human system by its use. His observations were made on himself, on many of his friends, and on a number of professional teatasters. According to Dr. Morton's elaborate synopsis of results, the immediate effect of a moderate quantity of the infusion produces 'an agreeable exhilaration of mind and body, combined with a feeling of contentment and placidity, and a cool and fresh feeling

feeling of the body.' Increased mental and physical vigour were likewise produced, with no noticeable degree of reaction such as follows after the imbibition of other forms of stimulants. Having entered into a variety of details, unnecessary for the unprofessional reader to know, the doctor essays to give his 'general conclusions.' These are arranged under a variety of sections. The following, however, form the gist of those most important to ordinary lovers of the fragrant leaf:

"1. That tea, taken in moderation, is a mental and bodily stimulant of a most agreeable nature, followed by no harmful reaction.

"2. That tea produces contentment of mind.

"3. That tea allays hunger and bodily weariness.

"4. That tea increases the *incentive* and the *capacity* for work.

"5. That tea retards the 'waste' or retrograde metamorphosis of tissue, and thereby diminishes the demand for food."

Cold tea is a refreshing drink for the railway traveller, as we mention in another chapter; and we cannot, we think, finish the present one better than by giving the following verbatim extract from an article in the *Daily Telegraph*, which appeared after the capture of Tel-el-Kebir.

"It has long been notorious that Sir Garnet Wolseley was a determined opponent of wine and spirits in the field, and the experience gained by him in Canada during the Red River

 expedition

expedition, inclined him to favour tea as the best beverage for soldiers in active service. Tea has always been a favourite drink with the Canadian lumberers, who pass the fearfully severe winter encountered by them to the north of Ottawa with no other rations than salt pork, biscuit, and oceans of green tea. Sir Garnet mentions more than once with pride that in the campaign against the rebel Riou, which carried him from Montreal far into the heart of what is now Manitoba, not a single spirit ration was issued to his soldiers, who faced the fatigue, the climate, and all concomitant hardships with unbroken health and spirits, tea having been their only beverage. He tells us that, if possible, tea should always be made in a vessel used solely for that purpose, although on service this is generally impossible. Before the tea is made the kettle should be well washed, and heated with a little hot water previous to rinsing it thoroughly. The water should then be boiled, and when it is boiling the dry tea should be added. If possible, the boiling water should be poured from one kettle into another which contains the dry tea. The lid should then be put on, and the pot placed beside, not on, the fire for five minutes before serving it out. If the water is hard, the addition of a small teaspoonful of soda to the camp kettle will be of great advantage. Tea possesses the merit of being susceptible of carriage in small compass without requiring, like coffee, to be roasted and ground before it can be made fit to drink. Coffee,

ground

ground in England, and packed into hermetically sealed cans before it is conveyed across the sea, loses many of its aromatic and stimulating qualities when opened and boiled. But tea, if kept dry, is an excellent stomachic, and, although less exciting than coffee, possesses all the valuable properties of its brother narcotic. Cold tea moreover is as palatable as hot, whereas cold coffee is unendurable; nor can we conceive anything more sagacious and commendable, than the order issued by Sir Garnet before the advance of the troops against Arabi's entrenchments that each soldier should carry cold tea in his canteen or water bottle. The water, having been boiled, had been purged of its deleterious and insalubrious elements, and under a hot sun nothing is so refreshing and sustaining as a drink prepared from what Pope calls 'the Chinese herb.' It is worthy of remark that the Americans always regard tea as what they call 'cat lap,' that is to say, as a beverage only fit for invalids. The quantity of coffee consumed in the United States is six or seven times greater than in this country, and, during their stupendous civil war the armies upon both sides would as soon have thought of fighting without gunpowder as without coffee. Upon many occasions the supply of the berry fell short in the Confederate States, but somehow or other enough came through the meshes of the blockade to make good the deficiency. Sir Garnet's preference is for tea above coffee, and although the men under his charge in Egypt have

have had but a short exposure to the climate, their health has upon the whole been sufficiently satisfactory to confirm him more than ever in his liking for 'the cup which cheers yet not inebriates.'"

CHAPTER

CHAPTER SIXTH.

Tea: Its Stirring Story. A Chatty Chapter.

"The joys of the teacup, oh, who wouldn't sing
Such a cosy and couthy and comforting thing?
Who cannot enjoy a good cup of tea,
Without taste or reason I'm certain must be."

A CERTAIN great, truly great man, who by the way never allowed modesty to interfere with his didactics, once ventured to hint that it required considerable force to get a joke into a Scotchman's head. I am not sure that the great man was altogether correct in his estimate of the exact amount of power to be expended in the interesting trephinic operation, but if he erred it was on the right side; success would therefore be a certainty. There are Scotchmen *and* Scotchmen however. How for instance about that inimitable conversationalist, that genial, genuine Scot, Professor Blackie?

In the interests of truth I must confess that in my time I have met with more than one Scotchman who was, as regards intel-

lectual

lectual capacity, obtuse even to obtundity; but then on the other hand, I have met many Englishmen who were downright dolts and dullards, with skulls and brains quite impermeable to the ether of wit, and as little capability of appreciating the pith of a good story as the tongs or the kitchen poker.

I could if I were so minded cite many examples of the humdrum Saxon, but being myself a Scot and the reader probably English, such a course would seem invidious. Author and reader bear to each other much the same relative position that guest and host do, and courtesy should never be forgotten either in book or at board.

But I will give you one instance of obtundity in a Scot. There is nothing much in it, only what I am about to relate proves the emollient, the humective effects of our favourite beverage tea on the brain of even "an obtuse." Yes, there isn't a doubt about it, McFearnought of ours was an obtuse. Even his dearest friends couldn't deny that. He was clever they would tell you, well read, a deep thinking man, and all that sort of thing; but he was not sharp sighted enough to see the cutting edge of an anecdote, *at the time* it was related to him. He would pretend to though, sometimes; but this was risky in the extreme, because he was nearly always sure to laugh at the wrong place. Our chief surgeon was an Irishman, and one of the liveliest members of our mess; he could spin a charming yarn, and tell the most

most racy wee stories ever you heard. But McFearnought was a kind of out patient of his for some liver derangement I believe, and often and often when he observed McFearnought straining to catch the point of the doctor's anecdote, the good little surgeon would shake his head and smilingly admonish him.

"Don't you try to do too much, Mac," he would say. "I don't want you laid up again. You can't see the joke now perhaps, but there is no hurry, any time next week will do."

But the best of it was that though McFearnought never could "spot" the funny part of a yarn just at the time, he had as much pertinacity as a bull terrier; he hung on the story, he remembered it, he cogitated on it, he slept over it, and it was always next morning at breakfast *when having his second cup of tea*, that the pith of some of the surgeon's jokes would scintillate across McFearnought's *cerebrum*, and then he would rub his hands rejoicingly and burst into a loud guffaw.

When these cachinnatory outbreaks took place during a lull in the conversation, they could not fail to strike any stranger who might be partaking of the matutinal meal with us as somewhat odd, but we ourselves were used to them. So we would smile, and explain that probably McFearnought had just then for the first time noted the bright bit in some anecdote of yester eve.

You

You see it was the *tea* that did it ; and, what is more, McFearnought knew it was the tea, and he always had a soft side to tea in consequence.

I'll never forget McFearnought's bold attempt to gain his promotion, it proved beyond dispute that this worthy Scotchman was clever though not brilliant. He served as acting commander in a gunboat for some time, and had great hopes that his brevet rank would be confirmed. I was sent with him, cruising on the eastern coast of Africa. We were up north for over six months, captured several slavers and frightened a great many more ; so when we returned to Simon's Bay we were made very welcome. It did not surprise McFearnought and myself in the least, to receive an invitation to dine with the admiral and his family on shore. McFearnought was in high feather.

"Hurrah !" he cried, waving the little missive over his head. "Hurrah ! if I can only make a good impression on the admiral for one night, he'll recommend me to the Lords Commissioners, and I'm sure of promotion."

"Well," I replied, "there is one way you can make sure of doing that. You know the admiral is in his dotage, I mean his anecdotage, he thinks he is very witty, and can tell most awfully funny stories. You've only got to listen well with an expectant smile on your face, and give a hearty laugh when he comes to the point."

McFearnought's

McFearnought's face was a long one at any time, but it grew longer as I spoke, and his jaw fell.

"Hang it all!" he said, "that is the worst of it. I'm so bad at seeing the points as you call them of good things."

But two heads are better than one. McFearnought and I consulted together, and it was determined that he should take the cue from me at the admiral's dinner, and only laugh when I smiled.

The eventful day arrived. McFearnought drank cold tea all the afternoon, and practised "laughing natural-like" before a looking glass.

We were the only guests. It was quite a quiet affair, and everything passed off as well as could be wished. Encouraged by McFearnought's appreciation of all he said, the admiral came out strong. As Burns would say :

> "The admiral told his queerest stories,
> McFearnought's laugh was ready chorus."

His promotion seemed a certainty. The cloth was removed ; the walnuts and wine were placed on the board. Our gallant host was pouring out his first glass of port, after finishing a yarn at which McFearnought had laughed immoderately.

"Now, sir," the admiral was saying, "I like you, sir ; you can understand and appreciate a good thing. Now do you know I told

told that same story to Captain C——, but for the life of him he couldn't see where the laugh came in. But I'll tell you a better one than that. When I was in the old *Sans* ——"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the butler entering and addressing the admiral; "one of the men has fallen down in a fit of some kind."

The admiral glanced towards me.

"Sorry to lose you for a time, doctor," he said; "but McFearnought and I must try to rub along for a little without you."

I was gone for about half an hour. When I returned the old admiral was asleep in his easy chair, with his silken bandanna on top of his bald head; McFearnought was alone at the table, toying with the nutcrackers; but one glance at his face told me he had lost the game.

McFearnought was *not* recommended for promotion.

* * * * *

A cup of tea at early morn. Do you indulge in such a luxury, reader? I do. And my servant knows how to make it; knows the exact amount of the herb to put into the tiny teapot (the herb itself is India's most fragrant and best), the exact amount of sugar, and the exact proportion of sweetest cream. I give the signal for infusion ere I get into my cold bath, and by the time

I have done and enrobed myself in loosely flowing toga, the salver stands on the mat. Just the tiniest milk biscuit is all that is needed as fitting accompaniment, and no better beginning could possibly be made to a day. After this slight but efficient refection, I shave; but while I shave I think, and arrange the work and business of the day that is before me; for my intellect feels as sharp as my razor after that morning cup of tea. I often sing while dressing, and if there be any one in the room I (Scot though I am!) even fire off jokes and perpetrate puns. These jokes come spontaneously. Fact! I haven't got to go feeling around for them so to speak. If my wit didn't dry up with the heat of the day, if it only could be kept wet till dinner time, I feel sure I should pass for a fellow of infinite jest and humour. However, I am convinced of one thing, that is, there is a deal of virtue in a cup of tea at early morn.

The other day while shaving I was wondering to myself what title I ought to give to the present little work on Tea. The word "Tea" all by itself seemed somewhat naked and bare. Sugar and cream go well with tea I grant you, but as a title the addition would be a failure.

"Happy thought!" I suddenly ejaculated, and giving vent to a shout something betwixt a Highland "Hooch!" and the "whoop" of an Iowa Indian, I executed a kind of a razor mazurka around

around the dressing room. "Happy thought! I have it. I'll call my book

'TEA: ITS STIRRING STORY.'"

"Beautiful!" I continued; "softness, sibilancy, and alliteration all combined in a single line."

[N.B.—Let me call the attention of my countrymen to the pun that gently floats in the adjective "stirring." They won't notice it else. Tea: its *stirring* story. You see it, don't you? Ha! ha!]

But my ardour was slightly damped when I remembered that a certain great firm of publishers have a book with a too similar title,* and that no doubt they have entered it at Stationers' Hall. But it would have been appropriate, wouldn't it?

When Greek meets Greek! It may not be known to all my readers that there exists, not only in London but in nearly all our large cities, "firms" of swindlers who do a flourishing business in what may be termed the wet tea line. I should think that some of these firms have a standing as far north as Aberdeen itself. I cannot say for certain that they have, but reasoning from analogy there is little doubt about it, unless it be true as some aver that the farther north you go, the honester are the lads (and the bonnier the lasses). Be this as it may, the following is a true

* "The Sea: Its Stirring Story." Messrs. Cassell, Petter & Galpin.

and

and succinct account of a little adventure that befel me in 1862. I was then a student in the university of Aberdeen, and one day while walking along on the sunny side of Union Street, I came upon a man standing beside a sack evidently well filled with something. He wasn't a prepossessing man by any means, nor was he very well dressed. He was perspiring freely, holding a dirty Glengarry in one hand, while with the other he wiped a bald *os frontalis* with an objectionable looking cotton handkerchief. The man, as I have said, was perspiring, and what is more, the sack seemed perspiring too; both man and sack were damp.

"I'm saying, sir," said this fellow to me.

"Well," I replied, "what are you saying?"

"Would you mind givin' me a lift on to ma shouther wi' this bit baggie?"

Now I am naturally one of the most obliging men in the world, so I did not hesitate a moment to do what the man requested.

"It *is* heavy!" said I, hoisting up the sack. "And how very wet it is! Whatever does it contain, my good fellow?"

"Seaweed," was the curt reply.

"Now listen," I answered sharply, "it doesn't smell like seaweed, and it isn't seaweed; so as you have told me a lie, and if you don't divulge, I'll pull you down by the run, sack and all."

"What do you want to know for?" said he.

"Only curiosity perhaps," I replied; "but this may be some

poor wretch you've drowned, and you may be carrying his cold slimy body to the dissecting room. You remember the lines :

> 'Burke and Hare
> Cam' doon the stair,
> With a body in a box,
> A ghastly corpse, for Dr. Knox.'

This, my dear friend, may be a body in a bag."

"There's precious little body in it," said the fellow with a gruff laugh; "it's tea leaves, and deil haet else."

"Tea leaves?"

"Tea leaves, nothing else; I've been round hotels and inns and places collecting them."

"But what," I continued, really moved by curiosity this time; "what the mystery do you collect tea leaves for? Look here" (seeing that the fellow hesitated to answer), "are you thirsty?"

"Man!" he replied, "I could drink a glaiss o' whuskey at ony hoor o' the day or nicht."

After such a candid confession of course we adjourned. The sack was placed at the door of an inn in Adelphi Lane, and I treated him to two consecutive "glaisses," which he swallowed after the manner of men eating oysters (or Scotchmen drinking whiskey).

"Weel, sir," he said, "I'll tell ye the truth. I buy tea leaves

leaves and sell them over again to wivies to spread over their carpets, when sweepin' them, to keep doon the dust. That's the truth."

"It isn't the truth, my man; Aberdeen wivies, of all wivies in the world, are not so averse to dust as all that."

"Weel, sir, I'll tell you the *real* truth this time, I sell the tea leaves to laddies to feed their rabbits wi'. That's the *real* truth this time."

I referred the man to my eye after that, and requested to know if he saw anything the colour of cabbage in it. Then I threatened to kick over the bag and call a constable; and finally I called for another "glaiss o' whuskey."

Glug! One gulp, down went the liquor, and then having had "the truth," and "the real truth," he told me what he termed "the honest truth," which I was bound to believe. This *honest* fellow it seems bought the tea leaves from *honest* landladies of inns and hotels, and sold them to an *honest* "firm" who dried and doctored them, mixed them with a modicum of full flavoured tea, and sold them to *honest* shopkeepers to retail to the public as pure tea.

So much honesty is somewhat confusing; but far be it from me to impute *dis*honesty to any one, and least of all to an Aberdonian.

When this honest bagman had glugged down the fifth "glaiss" his

his eyes watered, as well they might, and he winked and smiled with unutterable satisfaction.

"Man!" he said, "the fun o' the thing is this: the wivies, I mean the innkeeper wivies that I buy these tea leaves from, have a good guess what I do wi' them. They ken the leaves will be made ower again, as Morrison made his mither; but they little ken what I ken, for as sure as I hold this empty glaiss between me and the licht, they often *buy their ain tea leaves back again*, and no' a bit the wiser."

After reading the above no Englishman need be told that the Scotch are far more fond of tea than they are of —— of anything else to drink. They are really, I'm not joking.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

Tea Reminiscences.

"Sound, sound may she sleep, a douce woman was she,
Wi' her wheel and her cat and her cuppie o' tea."—*Old Song.*

A GOOD deal might be said in favour of the five o'clock or afternoon tea of modern times. It is a very enjoyable refreshment, and a very timely one, with common sense to recommend it. Always provided, if I may make use of medical phraseology, it be prettily compounded, carefully prepared, and neatly dispensed. There ought to be an air of refinement in the room in which it is partaken, the guests few if possible, and perfectly at their ease. The tea equipage should be neat and well chosen, and the tea itself the finest and best procurable for love or money. No need to say what the hostess herself should be; she will be natural, that is enough.

Of the so called tea of ordinary middle class life the less said the better. Children and some young folks, old maids, and old wives male and female, including shaveling curates and youthful marriageable medicos, readily accept invitations "out to tea" in

this

this fashion. The children pass restless nights thereafter, and are limp and clammy next day, and the older folks are neither better nor worse perhaps than they were before. But tea of questionable quality, piles of thinly cut bread and butter, the bread probably so new that it doubles round the fingers, the butter *not* so new, lardy cakes, suspicious jams and jellies, marmalade, and petty scandal! and to have to draw your chair up to a table and sit down to all this, and try to feel happy and try to look pleasant, while you are secretly wishing tea equipage, company, and all concerned what Rob Roy wished the weavers—ugh! it is one of the greatest trials any sensitive man could endure.

Tea at Sea.—It is a notorious fact that those who go down to the sea in ships seldom, if ever, enjoy the luxury of a good cup of tea. They tell you, if you complain, that tea always gets sea sick. It certainly tastes exceedingly squeamish, but I do not think it is as a rule the fault of the tea nor the fault of father Neptune either. In nine cases out of ten it is the cook that should be hauled over the coals. Probably he has not taken the trouble to rinse out the teapot, but has contented himself with flinging out the leaves; there is therefore about a tablespoonful of poison left in the pot; or the water he makes the tea with is foul, or is not boiling; or, and this is just as often the case as not, he lets the tea boil after he has infused it, and then adds a little cold water in the vain hope of bringing matters right. "Infuse the coffee and

and boil the tea, that is the rule of the road at sea." There is only one cure for this on board a man-o'-war ; rate the steward and disrate the cook, and introduce one or both to the gunner's daughter. So much for the tea served up in the officers' mess, but what about the tea our bluejackets have to swallow? Why, they are not supposed to know what good tea means. In the ward room it is the caterer's fault if a tea of good quality be not obtained, but poor Jack must brew what he can get on board ; no wonder then he designates the brown unhealthy decoction "water bewitched," "water made worse," "gunwash," etc.

It is a precious small allowance of grog that our sailors get now-a-days, and probably the less they have the better ; our men do not require Dutch courage at any time ; but in the name of kindness and humanity let the poor fellows have decent tea to drink.

Some may tell us that Jack couldn't appreciate good tea if he had it. This is wrong.

"By George, Bill!" I've heard one man say to another, "you ought to taste the tea my old mother makes."

I got a small packet of tea once, when lying in Malta, from the officer of a Russian frigate. I have seldom tasted anything to equal it. I gave a little of it to our sick-bay man, and told him how to make it. I asked him next day how he liked it.

"Like it, sir?" he replied, "if I had a cup or two of tea as good

good, or half as good as that every day, it is precious little grog I'd ever look at."

And I do not think that this sick-bay man is any exception, for it is my firm conviction that sailors like good tea as well as any other class of men, and thoroughly enjoy it when they can get it, which is seldom if ever.

Who supplies the tea for the Royal Navy? It is bought by contract. It is bought cheap, and we know it is nasty. No doubt there are good pickings for some people in the transaction, though meanwhile Jack goes to the wall; but then he ought to be content, for if the beverage called tea by courtesy which he has to swallow is not a very refreshing one, if it does not soothe and cheer the mind and exhilarate the body, inducing calmness and content, it does excellent duty by aiding the process of deglutition, which otherwise would often be found next to impossible; in other words R.N. tea serves the purpose of a choke rope.

Tea a comfort and solace to the aged.—My own old grandmother, called grannie for fond and for short, the dear old soul, I think I see her yet! Sitting there by the fire, 'twixt the gloaming and the mirk, in her long backed chair. Her knitting has dropped in her lap, the cup of tea is grasped in her hand. She is sipping it, pausing oft to gaze dreamily into the fire, dreamily but not sadly. She forms the centrepiece in a picture of calm content-

ment

ment, to which the cat, purring half asleep near her slippered feet, the brown teapot on the bink, and the kettle singing over the fire, are but accessories. Her white hair has been in the mools for many a year. God rest her old bones, she dearly loved her tea.

Tea as a gift to the poor.—You cannot give them a better, and seldom one that is more acceptable; and it will be doubly so if it be genuinely good. It is well to remember that good tea need not necessarily be very high priced, but that an ounce of it is preferable to a pound of bad.

Tea first introduced into Scotland.—I am not in a position to state with any degree of certainty or exactness, the date at which the fragrant herb was first introduced into stern Caledonia. Dates are really not of very much importance after all. School children have to remember them, burden though they must be to their young brains; but probably the wisest of us grown up folks are those who make it a rule, never to remember anything whatever that can be found in a book of reference or trustworthy cyclopædia.

Well then, in the reign of Charles the Second, just about the time that those round headed, long eared, toy spaniels became first fashionable, tea, as I have already remarked in a former chapter, first found its way into England, and we may rest assured that not long after this auld Scotland had a taste of it too

too. But it must have been many and many a year after this, before tea began to oust sack and ale from the tables of even the gentlefolks. It was looked upon at first as a great luxury, and consequently fit only to be partaken of by ladies and sick and effeminate folks. But nevertheless the good qualities of the herb were not long of being recognised; it was found exceedingly soothing of an evening, after a day's hard work or a long journey, and of a morning it came in exceedingly handy in banishing the effects of a wet night, which, as everybody knows, is usually followed by a dry morning.

Even till this day the peasantry, and those in rural districts, are accustomed to look upon tea in the morning as a luxury in which they only dare to indulge on a Sunday.

"Heigho!" says honest Geordie, the farm grieve or bailiff, as he draws his stool to the fire after supper on Saturday evening, and prepares to fill his pipe. "Heigho, boys! another weary week is past and the morn is the sabbath, a lang lie (rest) and a tea-breakfast."

This tea breakfast is not always such a very *recherché* repast after all. Sometimes brose or porridge is dispensed with, cakes, loaf bread, and butter taking its place, with, by way of relish or "kitchin," a bit of fried bacon, a red herring or yellow haddock, purchased at the market town on the previous Friday. At other times a small quantity of brose is eaten to establish a foundation for

for the good things to follow, and the banquet is washed down with well sweetened tea. Alas! the sweetening is often the best of it, for in frugal farmers' families the goodman or goodwife in the parlour has had the first of the tea, and after the tea-pot has been filled up and "sossed for a wee" on the hob or "binkie" it is sent into the kitchen, for Jockie and Jeannie's breakfast.

But even farm servants are beginning to know the flavour of good tea now, and do not care to be put off with the second water, though, judging from the numbers of advertisements of cheap teas in local papers, adulteration keeps pace with the times in bonnie Scotland as well as in merrie England.

"*A cup o' good tea gangs weel after a good sermon.*"—The following little anecdote shows the esteem in which tea used to be held some years ago, when the duty on it was so high as to remove it beyond the reach of the poor. A certain godly woman in the north was in the habit of trudging seven long Scotch miles Sunday after Sunday, to listen to the sermons of a favourite preacher. There were ministers nearer home, and godly men enough they might have been, but none according to her laid down the law Divine so fearlessly as old McK——. And what a solace it was to her after returning and laying aside her sabbath bonnet and sabbath "braws," to sit down to a cup of congou! It helped her to think, she explained to neighbours; it calmed the mind and paved

paved the way for reflecting on the good tidings she had heard dinned from the pulpit during the forenoon.

But one day she returned rather more quickly than usual.

She was almost breathless when she entered her own door.

"Have ye masked the tea?" she cried, addressing the servant.

"Indeed have I," replied Betsy, "I poured on the water as soon as I saw ye comin' up the loanings."

"Oh! weel, Betsy," was the answer, "it canna be helped. But just set it aside until next Sunday, for *auld McK—— dinna preach himsel' the day.*"

What a delicious cup of tea that must have been, infused on one Sunday and drank the next!

Tea Dinners.—These repasts are very common in the north on certain days of the week when household duties are heavy. A tea dinner is a union of tea and dinner, *plus* tea time and dinner time, for the latter is put back an hour or two and the former advanced, and thus they meet. But how much better is tea thus partaken of, along with a frugal meal, than the sour, sloppy, muddy, muddling beer that the English sons of the soil insist upon washing down their cold bacon and bread with!

Prigging.—The verb "to prig" has a very different signification in Scotland from what it has with folks on the sunnier side of the Tweed. An Englishman entering a draper's shop in the city of Aberdeen cannot form a very elevated notion of the honesty of its

its inhabitants if he finds himself confronted by a large printed card to the following effect:

OUR CUSTOMERS ARE RESPECTFULLY REMINDED, THAT NO PRIGGING WILL BE PERMITTED AT THE COUNTER.

But prigging in this case does not bear the same meaning it does in the lines:

He as prigs wot isn't his'n
When he's caught must go to prison."

It means haggling about the price. To prig also means to beseech or entreat, as "I priggèd with him not to do it." Prigging in this sense used to be, as far as eating and drinking went, quite a custom of the country and a mark of hospitality, and among the lower orders of the peasantry, and indeed among farmer folks generally, for a host not to prig with his guest at the table would have been to lay himself open to a charge of meanness. The custom is not an obsolete one to this day.

It is amusing to listen to a well meaning hostess at the tea table prigging with say a female guest. The conversation would run somewhat in the following strain.

Hostess: "You're no' putting your spoon in your cup already, Miss Smith, surely."

N.B.—To put your spoon in the cup is a signal you have finished.

Miss Smith: "Indeed am I, Mrs. Brown, I've had no less than five cups."

Hostess: "Nonsense, Miss Smith, ye maun have another."

Miss Smith: "I assure you I couldn't, thank ye a' the same for askin' me."

Hostess: "But are you sure ye canna drink another cup? Quite sure? Do change your mind, there's a dear. No? Well, then, half a cup? Just up to the blue then? No? Well then, Miss Smith, half a cuppie without sugar."

Miss Smith: "Not any more, I do assure you, Mrs. Brown."

Hostess: "Well, then, half a cuppie and a wee drappie o' whiskey in it."

Miss Smith (smiling in spite of herself): "Well, as you are so kind and so pressin', I dare say I must."

That drappie o' whiskey in the last cup has been the ruin of many an honest lad and bonnie lass, and for the sake of my country I sincerely wish no such unwholesome habit ever prevailed. Spirits and tea are directly antagonistic in their therapeutical effects on the system. To drink spirits after good tea is extreme folly, and most detrimental to the health.

And yet some one started a few years ago with the intention of leading out a new intoxicating drink under a particularly fascinating name. This liquor was said to combine all the good qualities of tea and spirit combined. The devil-in-solution was nothing

nothing to it. The doctors saw through it, and the new drink was not a success, and many a soul that would otherwise have been entrapped thus escaped destruction. We do not want such drinks. Grocers who are permitted to sell intoxicating drink over the counter often do a good deal more harm than they ought to do, when they write in Mrs. So and So's account "1 lb. best tea" instead of "1 pint best rum," thus aiding and abetting her in cheating her husband, breaking up his home, and blighting his life. Many a sad story, begun at the grocer's counter, ends tragically elsewhere.

I had meant to end this chapter here, but it would never do to close it so gloomily. Talking about breaking up homes or blighting lives isn't much in my line. Come with me then to *a homely Scottish tea party.* I have been to many hundreds of such. Perhaps it ought scarcely to be called a party, for only a few friends have been invited to spend a quiet evening because it is the eldest daughter's birthday. Ellie has just scored one and twenty; there are three lassies younger than she, and there are sons too, to the goodly number of five; but laddies, as Ellie's mother says, can always "do weel if they're willing," it is the lassies that are such poor helpless things till they get married.

It is a summer's evening, and everything is as peaceful and still around the little farm as the calm uneventful lives of the inmates, for the din and turmoil of the far off city and the cares of business life

life are unknown in this rural hamlet. The low lowing of milch kine is heard from the byres, the croodling of wood pigeons in the adjoining fir plantation, the song of birds among the broom, and the hum of velvety bees afloat in that field of blossoming clover, with the kirk path winding through it, whence the guests, singly or in twos, may be seen coming slowly towards the farm. Lads and lasses are all dressed in their best, no vulgar finery, but neatness and trigness, and the beauty of health dwells on every face and happiness beams in every eye.

It is such a beautiful evening that the tea table has been placed out in the garden under the trees, and the wind rustles pleasantly overhead, and the summer sunshine falls in patches of light on the spotless cloth.

Perhaps the host does not know much about the customs of good society, for he asks a blessing on "what we are about to partake." Then the smiling hostess fills out the tea. She can make it to perfection, the aroma is more delightful than perfume of rose garden, and she is woman enough to be pleased when her guests compliment her.

Now this is a high tea, for many of the guests have come from afar and the walk has made them hungry; but surely here is spread a banquet that a king might not hesitate to sit down to. What on earth could beat those broiled mountain trout,—they were alive this morning,—and those snow white eggs are really

and

and truly new laid; the fair fingers of Ellie herself formed those balls and scrolls of sweetest butter afloat in the crystal dish; the crisp oat cakes, the barley scones, ay, and the jellies and jams are all the fruits of Ellie's industry!

Her mother is probably proud of her eldest lassie, and she does not hesitate to tell her guests how handy Ellie is, albeit Ellie blushes at the recital and tries her best to stop it. Ah! there is one modest young farmer there on whom the mother's words make deep impression. Will he marry Ellie? Perhaps, but I'm not writing a love story.

After this frugal tea the lads propose a dance. A fiddler is seldom difficult to find in the rural districts of Scotland, and so they foot it on the green until the moon, shining down over the trees, warns them it is time that good nights were said and steps bent homewards. Ellie's brothers and sisters give their guests "a Scotch convoy," and it is far beyond the clover field that the real good nights are said, and so ends the homely Scottish tea party. No fancy sketch this, as my northern readers will know.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

Good Tea. How to get it; how to make it; when to take it.

"FIRST catch your hare" is an old saying, and good bricks cannot be made without straw, nor a silken purse manufactured out of a sow's ear. This is all very true, and it is equally true that the best *chef* the world contains could not make a cup of good tea unless possessed of good materials from which to make it.

The question then, how to get good wholesome tea, is really one of paramount importance to all who love the most comforting of all luxuries, and have a due regard for their health.

There are plenty of respectable grocers, not only in London but in every large town in these islands, who can supply a really good, well blended, and well flavoured tea at what, considering its quality, is a reasonable price. It would be invidious in a work like the present to mention names. The reader must find them out for himself; if he be not suited at one shop he can easily go to the next, and when he has found what he wants, namely a tea or a blend that pleases his palate, and that he finds really does

him

him good, let him stick to it, for speaking as a medical man I beg to assure him that there is as much difference between constantly drinking bad, worthless, or adulterated tea, and constantly drinking the genuine unadulterated article, as there is between bad health and good. The adulteration of tea is so well and skilfully performed now-a-days, that it is often difficult to detect, so much so at all events that if people had no other way of conducting their search for a cup of drinkable tea than analysing what they bought, they would soon give up in despair, and trust to pot luck,—teapot luck.

In choosing good tea in a shop, one ought to examine the article minutely; if a high priced tea, compare it with a cheap one. Hold a little in the hand and get the light to shine on it; by ocularly comparing teas and teas, the eye gets so far educated as to be able to tell the good from the bad.

I have in front of me, as I write, two specimens of tea. I have emptied them on two separate sheets of white paper, a medium priced souchong and a cheap Kaisow congou. The first is a clean looking tea; it does not strike you as being faced, quite the reverse, there is no suspicious shine about it, no leaden hue, the particles separate easily, they are loose as it were, and quite independent of each other, the twist is good, there are few stalks to be found, it tastes well when chewed, it is crisp and well fired, and has a wholesome malty smell; it is a bold looking tea withal,

for

for it has not been broken fine by the grocer's mill. Sample number two is suspicious in colour, over stalky, and over dusty, and you would not need a microscope to tell you the dust was not genuine, not all broken leaf; the twist is indifferent, and the particles have too much affinity for each other to seem pleasant, in a word, a tyro could tell this tea is not the real Sir Roger. I will not trouble to go in search of adulterations in either specimen. I will test them with neither water nor acid, but I will have a cup of no. 1 flavoured with a modicum of pekoe before an hour goes by; no. 2 I would not give to a buck rabbit.

In the search for a good cup of tea then I would certainly try to find that which was pleasant to the eye before put in the pot; my olfactory nerves would guide me in some measure in my choice, but I would not be led away by nice scent. I should like uniformity in shape and size of leaves to some extent, and I would not like too many stalks. If the tea were good, it would be pleasant to the palate when drank even unflavoured with milk or sugar, nor should its goodness all come off at once; but after I had drank a cup or two of it I should know by the state of my feelings, whether I had imbibed what was wholesome and health-giving, or the reverse.

When buying tea one should endeavour to deal at a respectable shop, even if the price be some pence a pound dearer.

Teas with terribly outlandish names are best avoided, they are evidently

evidently made names, and in their very ring can be distinguished from the names of provinces in India, Cachar for instance, Dehra Doon, Darjeeling, Assam, etc. Some people are fond of new-fangled teas, and new-fangled names attract them, and right well do unprincipled dealers know this.

Some teas are advertised as very superior; and as an inducement to buy them, and swallow them, pieces of plate, watches, jewellery, tea and coffee sets, china ware, etc., are presented to each happy purchaser of a few pounds. Eheu! in these cases it is not only the tea that is sold but the buyer thereof as well! But the fool cannot growl at the flat catcher, because his mouth is stopped with a gold locket or brass-gilt watch every time he opens it for a packet of the nauseating stuff.

No one should be led away by highly perfumed teas either. He should remember what the Chinese say, that really good tea needs no scenting. But if the buyer be a poor man, and still desires a flavoured tea that will not harm him, why let him do his own adulteration thus: let him purchase an honest, fair priced congou, and every time he makes his tea let him put in the pot a black currant leaf, or in spring time a bud.

What are called broken leafed teas, sold at about one and sixpence a pound, are best left alone. In mud eels are, in dust *dirt*.

A very large proportion of the tea sold in retail shops is blended or mixed, and some grocers are, to use a slang term, "swells"

"swells" at mixing. They study not only to please the tastes of their customers, but positively to educate their palates to a due appreciation of the particular blend they concoct and sell. They have to commence with good teas to mix from, and the tea that forms the foundation of their blend they buy in large quantities, so that when matched or made up it is about the same all the year round, never varying in flavour, being the same in strength and in the amount of colour it shows in the cup. The grocer has even to study the character of the water in his town, and sell a tea to suit it. The mixture sold must be most thoroughly well blended; this stands to reason, for if it be not so the heavier teas may find their way to the bottom of the mixture. Grocers must therefore be pretty adroit when selling their teas.

It is not difficult for any one who loves a good cup of tea to buy the pure unmixed teas, and try his hand and taste at mixing for himself.

The top leaves of the tea plant go by the name of tip, flowery pekoe, or orange pekoe, and are highly valued. Next in value comes pekoe, the fourth and fifth leaves are called souchong, meaning small sprouts. Congou is a coarser leaf, being the sixth; and bohea, the seventh leaf, is the commonest of all black teas.

Some kinds of tea in blending are chosen for the colour they give in the cup, others for their aroma and flavour, and so on and so forth.

Bad

Bad or inferior tea, as every housewife or mother of a family knows, gives all its strength to the first water. It won't stand the addition of more boiling water; the second cup is a mere sham, dishwater, or what you will. The reason of this is that the leaf quite expands as soon as the first boiling water is poured upon it, and if you want a second good cup you have to add more tea. But with a high quality tea it is different; the leaves do not quite open with the first water, and so the second cup is just as good as the first, and sometimes even better.

Cheap teas are dear at any price. The following is an extract from a letter written by a respectable wholesale firm: "A strong sense of duty impels us to endeavour to lessen the growing consumption of rubbish called tea, but which possesses neither the virtue of nourishment nor of cheapness. Teas are as good as ever they were, and obtainable too, if the public would only give a fair price, say *2s. 6d.* to *4s.* The evil so widely complained of is traceable to fierce and unwholesome competition, and by the lever of 'low price' the nation is grossly misled. Nor does this question of price apply to families exclusively. It is applicable with equal force to hotels, railway stations, and restaurants. The medical profession might do much to prevent these questionable compounds from being consumed in families, and the retail dealers of the United Kingdom, through their assistants, could do much to remedy the evil by recommending on economical grounds

grounds the better and purer classes of tea. We ask the public to make a definite stand against the almost valueless stuff, now so widely sold, and which, though retailed at a low price, is in reality dearer than the finest teas."

It is not every person who understands how to make a cup of tea well. It is very easy however to do so when one knows how to do it.

There are many queer ways of making tea. When Jeannie Jeal's son, who was serving in the merchant navy some hundred odd years ago, sent his mother a present of a pound or two, the worthy old Scotchwoman knew nothing about its preparation, but she boiled a quantity of it in the "parridge pat," strained it, throwing away the "broo," and dishing up the "blades." Then she called John her husband in to his dinner.

"Queer lookin' kail," said John, eyeing the dish suspiciously as he took his seat.

"It is what oor puir laddie, God bless him, sent hame, John. Try it, man; put a bittie o' butter over it to soften it."

John did as he was told, but, Scot though he was, he failed, and finally pushed aside the plate.

"Na, na, Eppie!" he cried, "it winna work. Trasherie like that may suit the stammachs o' danged fools o' foreigners, but comment me to good green kail, Janet. Pass the tatties."

The Bokharese are said to be great tea drinkers. I never drank

drank tea in Bokhara myself, so do not speak from experience. They are fonder of tea than a Dutchman is of his pipe, or a Scot of his dram. They carry a bag of it about with them when travelling, and give it to their innkeepers to brew for them. The Bokharese drink black tea mixed with milk or suet, and break up their bread in it, just as some of our own country folks do when concocting "sops" in the last cup. But when the Bokharese finish the tea they chew the leaves. The good people of Morocco mix green tea, sugar, and tansy into the cup, and pour the boiling water on that. They make tea similarly in China, but they omit the tansy. I have not tried tea with tansy myself, but it may be good. The herb is aromatic and tonic, and it is used by some people for culinary purposes, and tansy tea is an old fashioned remedy for debility. Some of the inhabitants of Japan grind the leaves before adding the boiling water. In some parts of Russia the juice of lemon is added to tea, in lieu of sugar and cream. Many of our American neighbours drink tea iced, out of tumblers, without either milk or sugar; a capital drink no doubt in hot weather.

I think, however, our own method of making tea is as good as any in the world, *i.e.* if it is properly carried out. Alas! how seldom it is so.

N.B.—The reader may have observed that in the last chapter or two I have been making use of the personal pronoun "*I*" in-

stead of the editorial "*We.*" Well, for this I must be forgiven; the weather is hot as I write, and one does like to doff one's journalistic jacket now and then by way of change, but describing the method of making a good cup of tea is a matter of such great importance that, while doing so, I feel in duty bound to once more mount the editorial chair.

We then, having been fortunate enough to secure a pound or two of pure fragrant unadulterated tea, must see that it is kept in an air-tight canister. If it be not so kept the tea will lose its crispness and flavour by absorbing moisture to some extent from the surrounding atmosphere, and by yielding up its volatile oil.

The *teakettle* should be kept scrupulously clean, both inside and out. We cannot expect to make good tea from water boiled in a kettle that is barked inside with lime or other deposit, and outside with soot. A dirty kettle proves the servant to be a slut, and darkly hints at carelessness in the mistress.

The *water.* This should be soft. We are well aware objections to this statement may be taken by some people, who tell us that the water should be a happy medium 'twixt the soft and the hard, that hard water prevents the extraction in sufficient quantity of the soluble principles of the tea, while soft favours the extraction of too much tannin. Well, if they will tell us how to make this happy medium, or where to get it, we would be glad to try it; meanwhile we prefer soft water, and will take good care by not

"stewing"

"stewing" our tea, or drawing it too long, to obtain the correct quota of extractive matter and no more. The Chinese are of our way of thinking. "Take the water," they tell us, "from running hill streams, or next best from rivers, but well water is the worst." Chinese wells, it should be remembered, are apt to be somewhat stagnant, and polluted too, whereas wells at home in England are usually pure enough, though of various degrees of hardness. There is nothing to beat rain water that has been kept underground in large tanks.

The water should be filtered.

The *fire* over which a teakettle boils ought to be as free from smoke as possible, otherwise it is not impossible that the water may partake of the flavour of peat, wood, or burning coals, and the tea be spoiled.

Before the water has come to the boil the teapot should be well warmed, and the tea put in. It may then stand for a short time on the hob, until the water boils, when—

The tea should at once be made. We heat the teapot in order to conserve all the caloric in the boiling water. We make the tea as soon as the water comes to the boil, because good tea can only be made with *freshly* boiling water, not boiling water that has been boiled before or has been kept boiling too long. Boiled water is flat because it is non-aerated, that is the "why and the wherefore."

Servants

Servants want to be drilled to this, or their heads drilled and the truth rammed into them. A worse fault than even this is making tea with water that *has gone off the boil*, which servants often do.

Carbonate of soda should *never* be used to draw the tea.

It is best, we think, (but we sit subject to contradiction,) to pour on all the water that is wanted, for the first cup at all events, at once, and not to merely wet the tea as it is popularly called.

It is a mistake to add fresh tea to that which has already been made by way of getting stronger, and yet we constantly hear the remark made, "Put a little more tea in the pot." If more tea or stronger tea is wanted, it ought to be made in another teapot, and a spare one often comes in handy.

A teapot ought to contain enough tea to go all round the company once at least; the habit of half filling all the cups, then adding boiling water and completing the work, is objectionable, not to say stingy.

Urns may be used, and some of them look very nice on the table; but the water should be boiling, and the urn itself must previously have been well dusted.

What is the best kind of teapot? There is a difference of opinion about this. For our part we like the old fashioned brown earthenware one, provided it holds enough. Next comes the silver teapot, which some prefer. We were trying to explain once

once to an old Scotch lady, that polished silver teapots retained the heat better than any other kind on the principle of radiation, etc., and thus made better tea; when we were interrupted as follows:

"I dinna know much," she said, "about the principles o' radiation, but in my opinion the reason for the tea bein' better is no' far to seek. Folks that can sport silver teapots can afford to put plenty o' tea in the pat."

White china teapots are also good. But in whatever teapot the tea is made, it ought to be clean and pretty new; an old teapot gets bad in the enamel or lined with deposit. An old clay pipe perhaps; but a new teapot!

The *cosy*. This is a woollen nightcap kind of an arrangement, which some worthy people stick over the teapot on the table to make it draw the tea by retaining the heat. Such an arrangement is hardly needed except perhaps in winter, and there is always the danger of the tea stewing too long under it.

How long should tea draw? From three minutes to seven, according to the kind of tea and the character of the water.

Invalids and people with delicate stomachs (and everybody else for that matter) ought to be most careful to obtain tea of superior excellence and quite free from facing and adulteration, and ought to attend rigidly to the plan of making a cup of good tea, which we have just been endeavouring to explain. The invalid

invalid should never on any account drink green or scented tea. The tea he is to drink, after having been infused for the proper time, say about five minutes, should be poured off the leaves into a well heated clean teapot, and served in that, covered by the cosy if there be one about.

Sugar and *milk*, or *cream*, are merely accessories, and may be added in quantity according to taste. Some people like tea without either milk or sugar. Others again will tell you that milk in tea is just as good as cream. We ourselves prefer cream for this reason; owing to its oily nature it retains the volatile oil which would otherwise escape in the steam.

The sugar ought to be the best white lump, and the cream *crême de la crême*, fresh and pure, and hardly a day old.

Farinaceous food, if food of any kind, is better with tea than meat, which latter the tannin is apt to harden in the stomach. Dry cold crisp toast, with or without butter, or buttered toast. We hardly ever see this latter properly made, except at our own fireside. We take the liberty of appending the receipt of our dear departed grandmother for making the same.

The loaf from which the bread is cut should be a tinned one two days old. The slices should be evenly cut, and fully half an inch thick. The process of toasting should be slowly and carefully carried out before a bright clear fire. On no account must any portion of the surface be burned, the whole should be a beautiful

beautiful brown on both sides, and while still hot the slice is to be placed on a plate, and the butter, fresh and sweet, laid thickly on, the surface being pierced here and there with the knife to let it penetrate, as it melts ; the crust of the slice should at the same time be broken with the handle of the knife to render it toothsome. A sprinkling of finely powdered salt should be dusted over all, and the toast is then ready for the table. Memo : to serve hot.

When should tea be taken ? This is a question which is easily disposed of. We counsel moderation in the use of tea ; too much should not be taken in one day, nor too much at any one time, nor should it be taken too strong ; but a cup of good tea may be partaken of at almost any hour of the day or night either, when one stands in need of refreshment.

The cup of tea after the bath of a morning, (and whosoever does not use the matutinal tub can hardly expect to be either healthy or happy,*) is a capital thing. With breakfast tea is for most constitutions equally as good as coffee or chocolate, and hardly so binding as the former.

In the forenoon, or heat of the day as some call it, a kindly cup of tea is more cooling, calming, and invigorating than wine ; it is moreover more staying, it is not so soon followed by the

* *Vide* "Turkish and other Baths," by same author, published by Messrs. Dean & Son, 160A, Fleet Street.

reaction

reaction that craves repetition of the stimulant to the injury of health.

We have already spoken in favour of the afternoon tea. Well, if we recommend a cup of tea about an hour after dinner, we may be accused of encouraging tea tippling, but we do so and chance it. This reminds us by the way of the story of the Glasgow landlady and her lodger. It may be new to some readers, so we give it. The lodger had only come recently to Glasgow, and of course he was enamoured of the grand old city, and, sad to say, of the Scotch whiskey for which it is famed. There is no knowing where matters would have ended had not the landlady come to his rescue.

"You're drinkin' ower muckle whiskey," she told him, "and I maun just put ye on an allooance, for tipplin' is a terrible thing. Weel, sir, I'll keep the bottle in my ain awmrie,* I'll gie ye a wee drappie before your breakfast and a wee drappie after your breakfast, a drappie at twelve o'clock, a drappie before your dinner, and a drappie after your dinner, a drappie in your tea, and a drappie before ye gang to bed, but *you'll no' dram dram a' day long in my house.*"

But we know many men who as regards tea follow the example of Dr. Johnson, and dram dram a' day long, and do not seem very much the worse for it.

* Cupboard.

Some

Some people however cannot stand much tea drinking, and for these about half an ounce or a little more of good tea per day would form an ample allowance. We should never forget too that it is most injurious, not only to the coats of the alimentary canal but to the whole system, to permit the tea to simmer for any time on the hob. It would be better if the tea were always poured off, after from five to seven minutes' infusion, and served in an urn kept hot by means of a spirit lamp.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER NINTH.

Tea, as the National Drink of England.

TEA in our humble opinion ought to be more a national drink with us than it is. We drink it in private it is true, but only too seldom in public. We sip our tea behind the scenes; we swill our ale in the highway or byeway, in theatre or in thoroughfare. Gentlemen enter a railway restaurant and call aloud for beer; if a man wants a cup of tea he glides mildly up to the counter, and in all humility cheeps out his request. Usually too the fair maids are in no particular hurry to serve him, and when it is at length placed before him, woefully seldom is it the cup that cheers. It might be said without fear of contradiction that railway tea is a vile imposition, an unsavoury fraud. And yet there is nothing more grateful to the weary traveller by rail, than a cup of genuine tea whether by night or day. Bitter beer or spirits may banish ennui for a time, but the draught has to be repeated again and again at almost every available station along the line, in order to keep up the effect and prevent reaction; then at the end of a long journey the traveller finds himself far more

tired

tired than he need have been. If any reader who happens to be going a long distance by train will take our advice and carry with him a quart bottle of cold tea made at home, and some light refreshment, to partake of by the way, we feel convinced he will see the folly of patronising railway restaurants, swallowing sawdust sandwiches, boiled tea, or beer. He will be able to step out of the carriage as fresh and cheerful as he entered it; and, what is more, he will positively have enjoyed the journey and the scenery.

We have spoken in this little work about adulterated teas. They are injurious enough to the health in all conscience; but adulterated beer or alcoholic liquor is far worse. And where can you find either now-a-days, of undoubted purity?

How much we would like to know, if we confine our imbibitions to beer, do we swallow of the following ingredients in the course of twelvemonths: liquorice, treacle, burnt sugar, gentian, quassia, carbonate of soda, sulphate of iron, alum, salt, opium, strychnia, and cocculus indicus? The poison of cocculus indicus is quite as deadly as that of the crotalus horridus,* though the latter does its work more speedily and in a much more business-like fashion.

If gin is drunk regularly, we are treated to varying quantities of

* The rattlesnake.

carbonate

carbonate of potash, alum, and lead, to say nothing of cayenne pepper essence and oil of vitriol.

If whiskey, rum, or brandy is our weakness, then is the adulteration, the poison, somewhat varied, but seldom or never wholly absent.

It must not be supposed however that we wish to preach teetotalism, we speak neither for it nor against it. Good beer, good wine, and good spirits are good things in their own place, and so is tobacco in moderation. It would be a good thing for England if each of them were used but not abused; but total abstinence is certainly to be preferred to intemperance.

And now just one word about stimulants, to brainworkers. In an article in *Knowledge* on "Stimulants and Study," the following words of the Abbé Moigno are quoted: Although eighty years of age, he enjoys, he says, "incomparable health, indefinite capacity for work, unconscious digestion, perfect assimilation of food, no hæmorrhoids, no constipation, no wrinkles, pimples, etc., etc.; and I may be permitted to affirm it with perfect confidence, those who follow in my footsteps will be rewarded as I have been.

"Add to this the habitude, irrevocably established, of never saying *I will do*, or *I am doing*, but *I have done*, and you have the secret of the enormous quantity of work I have been able to achieve, and which I achieve each day, despite my eighty years.

No

No one will deny me hereafter the honour of having been one of the greatest workers of my age."

The Abbé takes a small spoonful of brandy in his last cup at breakfast. "This," he adds, "is my whole allowance of stimulants. How happy would those be who should adopt my *régime*. They would be able, without harm, to sit at their desk immediately after breakfast, and to stay there till dinner time. No sooner would they be in bed, at about nine o'clock, but they would be softly asleep a few minutes later, and could rise at five in the morning full of strength, after a nourishing sleep of eight hours."

The editor of the same Magazine says: "I would venture to add an expression of my own firm conviction that a life of study is aided by the almost entire avoidance of alcoholic stimulants. I have repeatedly," he adds, "put this point to the test: I work say from breakfast till one o'clock, when, if I feel at all hungry, I join my family at lunch; if now at lunch I eat very lightly and take a glass of ale or whiskey and water I feel disposed about a quarter of an hour later to leave my work, which has for the time become irksome to me; and perhaps a couple of hours will pass before I care for steady work again; on the other hand, if I eat as lightly or perhaps take a heartier lunch, but drink water only, I sit down as disposed for work after as before the meal. In point of fact, a very weak glass of whiskey and water has as bad

an influence on the disposition for work, as a meal unwisely heavy would have. It is the same in the evening. If I take a light supper, with water only, I can work (and this perhaps is bad) comfortably till twelve or one; but a glass of weak whiskey and water disposes me to rest or sleep, or to no heavier mental effort than is involved in reading a book of fiction or travel."

And the article concludes: "For steady literary or scientific work however, and throughout the hours of work (or near them), it is certain that for most men something very close to total abstinence from stimulants is the best policy."

From his own experience as a hard working though probably little known literary man, the author can fully endorse all this editor says. Hours of work: usually from eight or nine in the morning until two, and in the evening from five till eight, the afternoon devoted to rest, with a large cupful of strong aromatic Indian tea at five, but nothing to eat with it.

Here is a scrap we just now found in a very *very* old magazine, with nothing else good in its pages: "*Drunkenness* expels reason; drowns the memory; defaces beauty; diminishes strength; inflames the blood; causes internal, external, and incurable wounds; is a witch to the senses; a devil to the soul; a thief to the purse; the beggar's companion; a wife's woe and children's sorrow; makes a strong man weak, and a wise man a fool."

Are not these words true? Did tea drinking ever lead to any such

such sorrows? We do not think so. The words of the paragraph, "devil to the soul," are wonderfully true. We often see a Bible in the hands of a tea drinker, never in those of a drunkard.

Speaking about the fragrant herb, evidently a great favourite of his, Douglas Jerrold makes the following remarks: "Of the social influence of tea, in truth, upon the masses of the people in this country, it is not very easy to say too much. It has civilized brutish and turbulent homes, saved the drunkard from his doom, and to many a mother, who would else indeed have been most wretched and most forlorn, it has given cheerful, peaceful thoughts that have sustained her. Its work among us in England and elsewhere, aye, throughout the civilized world, has been humanizing, good. Its effect has been upon us all something socially healthful; something that is peaceful, gentle, and hearty."

Blessed tea! we add, may its influence extend.

THE END.

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